

The Mekelle Prison Project

Creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for women and youth



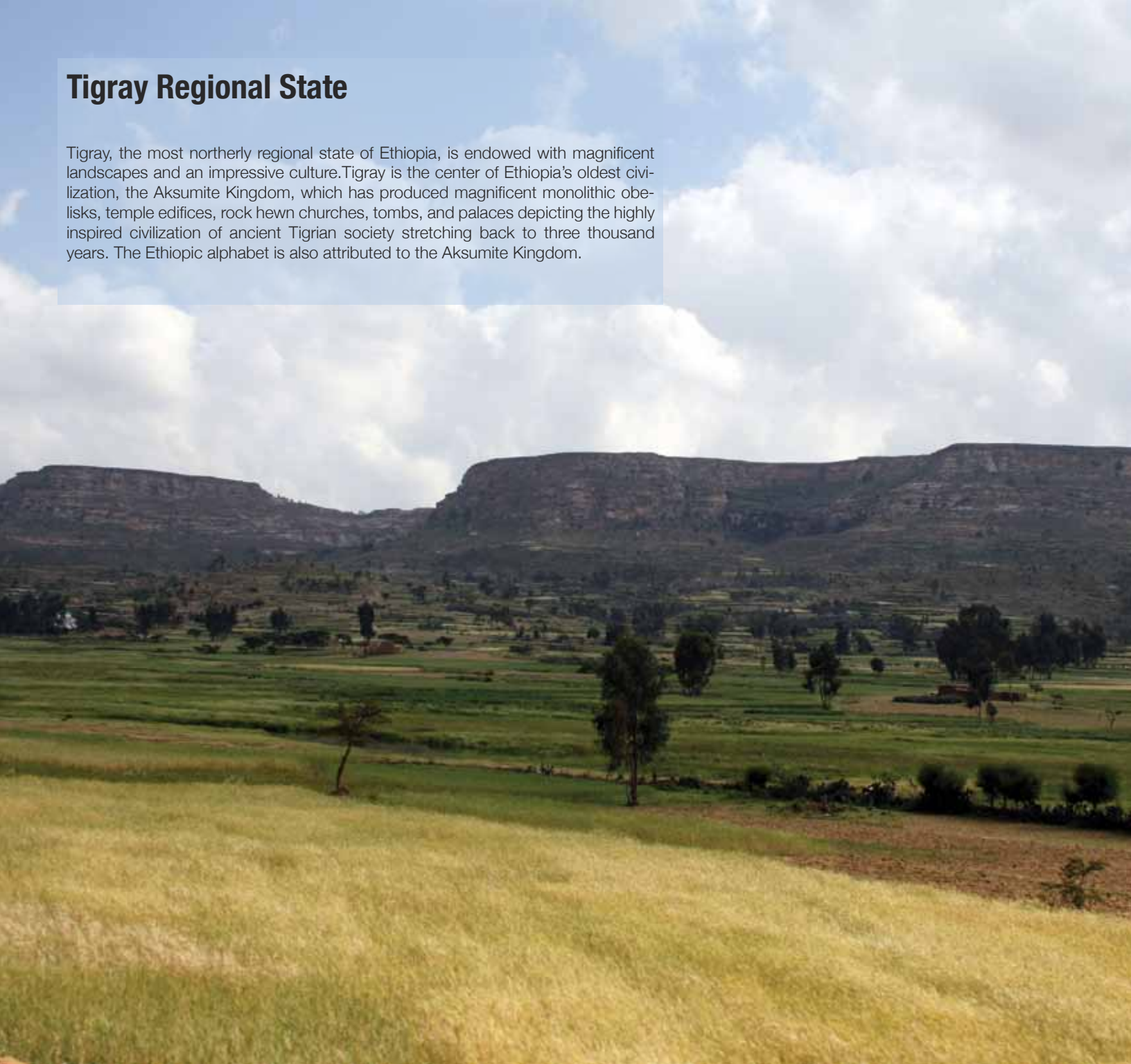


The Mekelle Prison Project:

Creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for women and youth, reducing crime and poverty through cooperatives and skills development and introducing in-prison financial services.

Tigray Regional State

Tigray, the most northerly regional state of Ethiopia, is endowed with magnificent landscapes and an impressive culture. Tigray is the center of Ethiopia's oldest civilization, the Aksumite Kingdom, which has produced magnificent monolithic obelisks, temple edifices, rock hewn churches, tombs, and palaces depicting the highly inspired civilization of ancient Tigrayan society stretching back to three thousand years. The Ethiopic alphabet is also attributed to the Aksumite Kingdom.





Message of the Head of the Security Administration Bureau of the Tigray Regional State

One of the indelible scars left by the previous regime on our people is the prisons it set up in various places that served as centers to carry out torture and punishment. However, the people have ensured that human rights are enshrined in the constitution of our nation and are actually respected in practice.

Some twenty-two years have passed since policies and strategies have been implemented enabling convicts remanded to prison following conviction by a court of law to give back to the community they harmed as well as to make them productive citizens by rehabilitating them psychologically and providing them with different academic and vocational trainings. Presently the correctional facilities in Tigray Regional State enable inmates to acquire knowledge and vocational skills that facilitate the conditions that allow them to turn into productive citizens.

It has been some time now since prisoners began to appreciate that prisons are no longer the hell they used to be but are in fact centers of change where they endeavor to engage in development. The various projects the International Labor Organization (ILO) carried out and commissioned in cognizance of this in Mekelle prison as part of the effort to create a center that is conducive to inmates is one indication of the support offered by the ILO.

While extending our heartfelt thanks to the ILO on behalf of the Bureau and the Region for its noble aim of backing the policies and strategies of the Government, I call on the Organization to deepen its customary support in ramping up the assistance provided to Mekelle prison.

The Honorable Ato Hadush Zenebe

Head of the Security Administration Bureau of Tigray Regional State

Mekelle Prison ...

Building prisons alone does not help in reducing crime as well as rehabilitating and improving the lives of prisoners, the majority of whom are often young men and women who end up in prison for petty crimes arising from poverty. 80 per cent of inmates at Mekelle Prison are young men and women convicted of petty crimes and serving sentences of up to six years.

The better way forward for such prisoners is to provide them with education, skills training and opportunities to access finance and engage in economically useful activities. In Mekelle, a town in north Ethiopia, the Prison Administration has initiated a rehabilitation and skills training program coupled with access to financial services that has enabled the creation of 31 active cooperatives that run successful businesses providing Decent Work for prison inmates and released prisoners.



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The Project

Mekelle Prison is an outstanding achievement in the region and the country thanks to the developmental role of the Regional Government of Tigray and the Prison Administration. This Prison Administration has helped provide opportunities for social and behavioral transformation for inmates.

With a strong belief that education, skills development, access to finance and financial literacy are key drivers for eliminating poverty and creating sustainable livelihoods, the Prison Administration is actively engaged in creating decent work through cooperatives, microfinance and microinsurance. Prison officers have also been trained in management and leadership so that they are able to better appreciate the value of transforming women and men to become successful members of their communities.

Currently, the Mekelle Prison Center is providing basic education, cooperative management, financial literacy, skills and business development training.

DECSI has supported the project by providing financial services and financial education. ILO and IDCO have engaged in providing technical and financial resources for capacity building activities and funding for the construction and equipment of training facilities. At the hear of the ILO/IDCO engagement is their determination to provide a significant gender dimension aimed at social and economic empowerment of women. The rights of women inmates are thus being highlighted and respected and they are provided with opportunities for skills training and financial literacy to help them successfully integrate with society and live a life free from crime and poverty.

The project has succeeded in achieving its set targets for capacity building of the Mekelle Prison Administration, transformation of inmates through education, skills development and financial access, and setting a model for other prisons in the country and beyond.





Impact of the Prison Program

The successful rehabilitation activities in Mekelle prison have brought real behaviour changes in the inmates. The capacity building program in the center has brought multiple benefits to the correctional center, the community and the region. The prisoners are returning to society with new skills, greater employability, a better chance of integrating with the community and leading a peaceful and productive life, thus reducing crime and the number of inmates returning to prison.

In some cases, there are situations where some of the ex-prisoners are participating in the programs of community policing to bring peace and security to their areas. As the inmates are engaged in productive activities, the correctional center benefits from reduced disciplinary problems among inmates.

Specific achievements:

- Training for prison inmates: 1280 prisoners have been trained in business development skills, financial literacy and cooperative management; 610 prisoners have received basic education, vocational skills, training in metal, wood work, electrical and plumbing, construction, hollow block production, cobblestone cutting and paving, masonry, carpentry, agriculture, weaving, tailoring, embroidery and hair dressing. 91 prison in-

mates have completed TOT (training of trainers) courses in a number of skills, coop and financial products.

- Training for Mekelle Prison Officers: 20 prison administration officers were trained in prison management, conflict resolution, negotiation, governance, gender and other related subjects; 141 women prison wardens have been trained in gender and rights of women prison inmates.
- Training for DECSI staff: 231 DECSI Staff members have been trained in microinsurance and risk management.
- Construction of prison and coop as well as street children training facilities and acquisition of equipment have been completed as planned.
- Access to financial services: 31 coops have been established and supported; adequate savings, credit and microinsurance access has been provided through DECSI's Prison Branch.

Effectively, the Prison has been transformed into a training and coop business facility.



Mekelle Prison Administration

Vision:

Guarding prisoners in confined prison blocks doesn't help them become responsible citizens when they are released. The better way forward is to undertake real engagement whereby prisoners are provided with education, vocational training and an opportunity to establish and manage their own businesses.

Objectives:

- to improve prison administration management skills, share innovative ideas and good practices;
- to introduce sustainable skills, business development and financial education for all prison inmates, with a special focus on women, so that they can engage in socially and economically beneficial activities during and after their prison terms;
- to introduce viable cooperatives owned and managed by prison inmates, that produce goods and services that are in demand within the regional state and beyond, strengthening the active involvement of women;
- to track changes in livelihoods and behavior that may result in prison inmates from the transfer of knowledge and skills as well as decent work opportunities;
- to share lessons of MPA as a viable tool for managing prisons, reducing petty crimes and creating sustainable work and entrepreneurial opportunities for young women and men that are pulled into crime mainly by lack of support and opportunities;
- to promote gender equality and women economic empowerment within the prison.

The success of the Mekelle prison is mainly attributed to the implementation of government directives that encourage prison offices to initiate innovative programs and the partnership it has created with regional stakeholders such as the Bureaus of Education, Health, Labor, Mekelle University, MSE Agency, TVET, DECSI, ILO, IDC and others.



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Dedebit Credit and Savings Institution (DECSI)

DECSI has empowered millions of Tigrians to create livelihoods and manage businesses that currently support over 1 million households. This institution started its function with an initial capital of 4 million birr, but in 17 years DECSI has transformed itself into a world-class financial institution with total assets in excess of 3.3 billion birr and savings mobilization of 1.5 billion birr.

DECSI has a total of over 352,000 active borrowers and 640,000 savers, of which 30,000 are children. Close to 60% of its clients are women; and it has a loan recovery rate of 98%. From the credit and saving committees at grassroots level to the board of directors of DECSI, women and youth are represented. There are also special product services designed for women entrepreneurs and the youth in the urban areas. Landless youth of both sexes are specially treated with special and flexible loan products in the rural areas. The urban household package loans are also designed so that the youth can easily access in average 20,000 birr start-up loans on an individual basis without any collateral requirements. These actions are taken in order to create more job opportunities for the unemployed/underemployed women and youth entrepreneurs in the region.

Currently, almost 38% of the total number of borrowers falls within the age limit of 18-27 years holding 41% of the total portfolios in the institution.

DECSI believes that microcredit or other financial services are the fundamental rights of those who need and can use them. As far as the projects are feasible and adding value to the economy, DECSI supports any initiatives from the community or individuals.



*Ato Atakilti Kiros,
CEO, DECSI, during the project implementation*

The same is also true for the prison inmates. Once the institution realized that there were some cooperatives that could run better businesses while they were in the prison along with the existence of highly committed prison managers fully engaged in supporting the inmates by providing skills training, DECSI was able to start providing microfinance services to prisoners.

DECSI and the Prison Administration agreed to utilize the vast idle labor force in Mekelle prison and incorporate it into the productive forces in the region. The prisoners were trained in a number of skills for which DECSI provided working capital. The cooperatives that have borrowed working capital from DECSI are profitable and are paying back their loans fully.

International Labour Organization (ILO)



The International Labour Organization (ILO) is devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. The ILO's main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues. Its tripartite structure with government, employer, and worker representatives provides a unique platform for promoting decent work for all women and men.

ILO's four strategic objectives are:

- Promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work
- Create greater opportunities for women and men to decent employment and income
- Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all
- Strengthen tripartism (cooperation between governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations) and social dialogue

In support of its goals, the ILO offers technical support to its tripartite constituents, and society as a whole in: 1) Formulation of international policies and programmes to promote basic human rights, improve working and living conditions, and enhance employment opportunities, 2) Creation of international labour standards backed by a unique system to supervise their application, 3) An extensive programme of international technical cooperation formulated and implemented in an active partnership with constituents, to help countries put these policies into practice in an effective manner, and 4) Training, education and research activities to help advance all of these efforts

ILO in Ethiopia

The ILO country office for Ethiopia and Somalia, based in Addis Ababa, coordinates and oversees the activities undertaken in these two countries. The office's main objective is to work closely with ILO's constituents – Government, Employers and Workers organisations to promote Decent Work for All. The ILO country Office aims at achieving the four strategic objectives of the ILO in the countries of operation. The identification and achievement of the objectives depend on the needs of each of the constituents as reflected in each country's Decent Work Country Programme and drive to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Within the context of UN's delivering as one, the Country Office works with the United Nations Country Team to promote the ILO mandates, the needs of its constituents and in support of the national development strategies – and insures their articulation in the United National Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

Financial inclusion of the working poor through financial literacy, skills development, cooperatives, microfinance and microinsurance is a major development activity of ILO's Enterprises Department that includes, among others, Coop and Social Finance Units as well as the Microinsurance Innovation Facility, a global resource center for research, innovation and learning that promotes microinsurance development globally.

Italian Development Cooperation (IDCO)



Italy has been contributing to the development goals of Ethiopia since 1986, always aligned to national priorities and the Growth and Transformation Plan in close collaboration with other development partners.

The Italian Development Cooperation (IDC), through the recently signed Country Programme 2013-2015, doubled the allocated financial resources (98.9 million EUR, divided between grants and soft loans) compared to the previous three years. Alongside water, agriculture, rural and private development, which have been confirmed as priority areas, gender will continue to be a key sector of intervention.

In line with the IDC longstanding commitment for the advancement of women worldwide and in Ethiopia, in 2012 we decided, together with ILO, to take the challenge of empowering inmates of Mekelle Prison Administration especially the women.

We appreciate the outstanding job that Mekelle Prison Administration is carrying out and we fully embrace its mission of eliminating urban poverty and realizing sustainable livelihoods among the poor inmates with particular attention to women. So far, Mekelle Prison Administration has achieved remarkable results in the development of small-scale business enterprises, providing skills development training, access to financial services and creating 31 saving and credit cooperatives.

The Italian Development Cooperation is proud to have contributed to these major achievements that are factually changing living conditions of poor people contributing to the reduction of small crimes.



Mr. Jürgen Schwettmann,
Director, PARDEV, ILO headquarters

"I have been working in the field of cooperatives for over 30 years mainly in Africa but also in other countries as well. I have visited thousands of cooperatives in all these countries but I have never seen a cooperative like the one in Mekelle. In fact, there are ten different cooperatives in Mekelle formed by prisoners themselves and managed by the prisoners themselves thus providing income to the prisoners. That is an astonishing example of cooperative development. I have mentioned this to many people including an organization called 'Prisoners without Borders', a friend organization that is seeking to replicate this very successful example in other parts of Africa."

Mr. Jürgen Schwettmann, then Deputy Regional Director for Africa, visiting Mekelle Prison, in 2010

"This visit has pleased me because it is very difficult to call it a prison. I know about prisons. I have visited prisons in other countries, and we have had some experience in assisting prisons in Lebanon. But this is a completely different experience; we saw women performing various kinds of work - beauty salon, bakery, embroidery but also construction work, metal work, woodwork and more. It is the first time that I have seen such a well-planned strategy where prison administration, financial and training institutions and international development organizations are working together to improve and change lives, thereby reducing crime and violence."

*Fabio Melloni,
visiting Mekelle Prison, in 2011.*



*Mr. Fabio Melloni,
Director of Italian Development Cooperation
Ethiopia*

Ethiopia's Development Strategy

The national development policy of Ethiopia, geared towards decreasing poverty and bringing about sustainable development has created a favorable environment for the emergence of development oriented programs in the country. Agriculture Development Led Industrialization (ADLI), Industrial Development Strategy (IDS), and Poverty Reduction Strategy Program (PRSP), the National Micro and Small Enterprise Development Strategy (NMSEDS) have actively promoted the agricultural sector and MSEs as instruments in their respective development objectives. The main objectives of these policies and strategies are to increase the benefits earned from integration of industry and agriculture to identify the key sector measures and cross-cutting priority issues and to ensure MSE development through government support.

Currently, the country has registered excellent achievements in the rate of GDP growth with consistent figures reported from between 9.9% to 12.6% during the past 2003/2004-2010/2011. Major breakthroughs were also brought in the infrastructural development of the country and other social services. These achievements are the result of the national development policies followed and implemented by the government and the continual support of its development partners. Followed by the successes registered in the implementation of PASDEP, the government of Ethiopia has drawn a new five year plan commonly known as the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) for the 2010 - 2015. The overall objectives of this plan are to ensure rising household income and reduced poverty levels to about 22% in line with MDG targets.



Solid Foundations by Federal and Regional Government

Some years ago, the Ethiopian government instructed all prison administrations in the country to come up with innovative ideas to enhance efficiency and reduce costs. The Mekelle Prison Administration submitted a training-cum-production program that would provide prisoners with new skills and also enable them to generate their own income and rehabilitate them to become law-abiding members of their communities. Such schemes exist, of course, in many other countries; the schemes pioneered in Mekelle, however, innovate on three fronts:

- Prisoners are encouraged to form producers' cooperatives that they manage as autonomous enterprises that are formally registered by the Registrar of Cooperatives through democratically elected leaders.

- These cooperatives establish direct commercial relations with the "outside world" without interference from the prison administration. Customers may buy goods directly from the cooperatives (which operate in a closed area adjacent to the main prison building), or have such goods delivered where they are needed (by lorry drivers who are also inmates driving trucks owned by the cooperatives).

- Once released, the former inmates may remain members of the cooperatives and continue working with them. In fact, released prisoners have been provided with a compound outside the prison walls to run their cooperative business. A facility has been built outside, next to the prison, to provide education and skills training opportunities for street children in Mekelle who face the risk of prison life due to a lack of support and work opportunities.

A new regional law for cooperatives that allows prisoners to establish cooperatives has helped facilitate this prison initiative of the Regional Government. This policy was then adapted and incorporated as part of the business process reengineering of the Mekelle Prison Administration. The Mekelle prison has also defined its mission, vision and goals and put its values in terms of the correctional duties and privileges of the inmates as reflected in its strategic plan.

The achievements in the Mekelle prison facility are the coordinated results of the government's policies and genuine participation of the regional stakeholders. As the country has shown its commitments to the international protocols on human rights and a due respect to its constitution, the government has issued different laws at different times to guarantee the respect of prisoners' rights during their stay in prison. The regional prison policy has established that inmates have full rights to access capacity building services, counselling, consulting for legal issues, skills training, business development services, formal education and the right to engage in income generating activities.

The Regional Cooperative Law

The cooperative societies in the prison were established based on Proclamation No. 145/2000 EC of the Tigray Regional State issued in 1998 and the new manual developed by the Tigray Prison Administration. According to this manual, all prisoners who have passed through the legal and correctional procedures were allowed to organize and create cooperatives.

The main objectives of the Regional Government's policy are to provide opportunities for all the prisoners to acquire skills and organize themselves into cooperatives and start generating sustainable incomes. As soon as prison inmates complete the preparatory process of establishing cooperatives, the regional Bureau of Cooperatives and the Bureau of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) are responsible for providing them with training and tools on cooperative management concepts, business development services and other relevant issues before they approach financial service providers. The cooperative law of Ethiopia requires applicants to prepare and file their memorandum of association, list of members and appointed committee leaders and a business plan. These were the processes followed during the establishment of the Mekelle Prison cooperatives.



Training of Prison Officers

The Bureau of Security and Justice of the Regional Government is responsible for the administration of the prison services in Tigray. Full time management training is a requirement for an officer to qualify as a Prison Administration Officer. Mekelle Prison Administration went through 'Business Process Reengineering' BPR, as required by the Federal and Regional Government and came up with the Prison Administration Manual that defines responsibilities, privileges and rights of the inmates and the responsibilities of the prison administration officers. While defining the rights of prisoners, all international conventions and protocols were considered with special attention paid to the constitutional rights of inmates.

ILO supported the training of 20 prison officers from the Regional State for a two-week period at the Ethiopian Management Institute Campus in Debre Zeit in December 2012. Training topics included institutional leadership characteristics, management processes, human rights, gender, communication, stress management, conflict resolutions, financial management, human resources management, team building and other management subjects. According to the trainees, they have found the training very timely and useful to improve their managerial skills in dealing with the inmates for better and harmonious results.





Prison Management Study Tour in South Africa

The prison management study tour was part of the prison management-training component of the Mekelle Project. The study tour was organized for Ato Ferede Yeshiwondem, Commissioner of the Regional Prison Administration. The experience-sharing visit lasted for 9 days and included field visits to a few prison/training centers in the country as well as in-depth discussions with South African prison officials.

The study tour included visits to various training centers. The following were the main lessons learned during the study tour.

- The prisons' administration is given a high priority in the government and is established at the Ministerial Level.
- The budget allocated for the prison administration is substantial.
- The standards of the prisons are similar throughout the country. The quality of the facilities is also very high and is similar throughout the different prison centers.
- There is a great deal of attention given to the training of the inmates.
- With regards to farming, cattle production as well as wood and metal work, the quality of the products and the high standards observed during production are seen as exemplary to help improve the prison centers in Ethiopia.
- However, there are major differences in the business models of South Africa's prison administrations when compared with Ethiopia. In the case of South Africa, all the income that is generated from the sale of goods produced by prisoners is managed by the prison administration. Also, once the inmates are in prison they are not allowed to have any money in their possession. In Ethiopia, prison inmates are entitled to hold money with them or save at the microfinance branch within the prison, make remittances to support family members, pay for goods and services, education, etc.

Basic Education

Significant transformational activities are happening in the Mekelle Prison Center. The correctional unit believes that the transformation program assists offenders in becoming productive workers and contributing members of society.

Inmates with no educational backgrounds attend formal education starting from grade one to grade ten. All women prison inmates that did not have prior formal education participate in the program. The Ministry of Education helps by providing teachers and teaching materials.



Business Development Skills and Vocational Training

The Mekelle correctional center has become a model prison center where both male and female inmates are pursuing academic education and skills training through the vocational school services. The new initiative in the prison facility is designed to provide across the board life changing support to the inmates for whom training can facilitate positive changes in their lives before and after their jail terms.

While the Tigray technical and vocational school is training some of the inmates in different skills, the prison administration is coordinating the activities of the prison cooperatives and creating a fertile ground for the successful implementation of their business plans. The new capacity building was designed in close consultation with the prison administration office in order to resolve some of the key gaps in graduating good quality trainees from the

center by creating new windows of opportunity to combine skills training with other business development services that would help the cooperatives to be more productive, efficient and competitive.

The scope of skills training covers wood work, metal work, weaving, tailoring and embroidery, cattle fattening, agriculture, home economics, plumbing, electrical work, hairdressing, hollow block and cobblestone production. So far 88 (25% women) inmates have been trained in Business Development Skills (BDS). Training of trainers (TOT) was also provided to 91 (40% females) inmates. As a result of the skills and cooperative training provided at the prison, the prison administration reports that the number of repeat offenders has reduced very significantly when compared to past years.



The Prison Cooperatives

While the majority of cooperatives are organized under the construction and textile sectors, the remaining members are engaged in service and agricultural activities. Although the number of women inmates has declined from around 560 at the beginning of the project to 56 at the end of the project period, all women inmates are members of at least one cooperative society.

Firstly, the inmates are allowed to establish cooperatives of their own. Once awareness creation activities are carried out by the prison administration, the regional cooperative office and MSE Agency. Secondly, intensive training is provided on cooperative management, business development services, and microfinance. Thirdly, the Tigray Technical Vocational Education and Trainings (TVET) agency is involved in skill development training programs in a variety of professions including masonry, wood and metal works, plumbing, electricity, etc. Financial education is also provided in collaboration with DECSI. These coordinated activities are the main reasons for the business success and profitability of the prison cooperatives.

Many of the investments needed to start production were financed by loans from DECSI, disbursed directly to the respective cooperatives but backed by a guarantee offered by the prison administration. Repayment rates are excellent. The original loans have been partially repaid on schedule and additional funds borrowed for needed improvements.

The cooperatives are relatively small, consisting of between 10 and 147 members, which is quite typical for producer cooperatives. During peak order seasons, some cooperatives hire workers since they cannot cope with the demand for their products. Cooperative members earn monthly cash income between 600 to 900 birr, which is above average wage levels paid in the private sector in the area. Once released from jail, cooperative members may request the reimbursement of their share or decide to remain members.



The Business Case of Cooperatives

The cooperative societies in Tigray are organized by members on a voluntary basis. They are legally established to engage with the business environment in the production and service areas on sound business principles. The same is true for the cooperatives in the Mekelle prison. There are 31 cooperatives engaged in various areas including construction, weaving, agriculture, trade and services.

In terms of their profitability, reports from the cooperatives show that their businesses are very successful in generating profits. For instance, the total annual turnover for ten of the cooperatives was about 4.4 million birr, with total equity that has risen from 87,850 birr to 907,692 birr in one year. All cooperatives have achieved positive performance, and many are paying an average salary of 600 birr per month. (The remainder of the profit after salary and other expenses will eventually be distributed to members and/or saved for growing the business).

As they set up cooperatives, inmates are given training that covers cooperative principles, the main legal provisions of the Cooperatives

Proclamation, their rights and obligations, organizational structures of cooperatives, duties of office bearers, business planning, financial management, internal controls, etc.

The project has trained 41 women inmates among 103 cooperative leaders in team building, division of tasks, accounting, governance, savings, loans and micro-insurance. It is encouraging to see the experience of the Mekelle prison facility where strong cooperatives are working together for a common goal. The reports for 2012 of the prison office states that TVET and the agricultural college in Wukro trained a large number of inmates during the last four years, and that some 2699 jobs were created during the period 2009 to 2012 inside and outside the prison with the majority of jobs in the areas of construction, production of building materials, weaving and agriculture. 10 million birr worth of cooperative business was also created under the project in constructing the prison's training facilities.



ILO and Cooperatives

The ILO views cooperatives as important in improving the living and working conditions of women and men globally as well as making essential infrastructure and services available.

- Under the ILO Constitution cooperative organizations have consultative status. This is in recognition of the fact that cooperatives provide for direct, indirect and self-employment in great numbers and that they contribute to securing the livelihoods of a significant portion of the world's population. They provide a special framework for social dialogue and social security and give a voice to many who would otherwise remain unheard.
- The Cooperatives Unit of the ILO is part of the Enterprises Department. Within the UN system, the ILO is the only international organization to have a general, explicit mandate to work on cooperatives through its Cooperative Unit.
- The Cooperatives Unit serves ILO constituents and cooperative organizations in four priority areas:
 - Raising public awareness on cooperatives through evidence based advocacy and sensitization to cooperative values and principles;
 - Ensuring the competitiveness of cooperatives by developing tailored tools for cooperative stakeholders including management training, audit manuals and assistance program.
 - Promoting the Inclusion of teaching of cooperative principles and practices at all levels of the national education and training systems; and,
 - Providing advice on cooperative policy and cooperative law, including participatory policy and law making and the impact on cooperatives of taxation policies, labour law, accounting standards, and competition law among others.





Cooperative Principles:

Cooperatives around the world generally operate according to the same core principles and values, adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance in 1995.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

3. Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other

organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative's autonomy.

5. Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

6. Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.

Training in skills that are in demand

The training provided with the improved facilities of MPA has created a vast pool of technically skilled quality labor force that can quickly fit into the working environment within and outside the prison. For instance, the labor force obtained in the correctional center carried out all the construction activities in the Mekelle prison facility. Although all the contracts were given to the cooperatives inside the prison, the bidding processes were equally open for any contractors in the market.

Inmates trained in making cobblestone can easily fit into the massive cobble stone activities in Mekelle and towns in the region. Some are even engaged in the field of metal and woodworks, easily getting employment by presenting their training certificates.

Women inmates are trained in different professions. Except elderly women who don't want to join the cooperatives or the training provided to inmates, all women inmates are trained in various skills that are in demand when they are released from prison. With the newly equipped training facility, more and more youth inmates especially women will be trained in skills that will provide them with sustainable livelihoods in the outside world.

In addition to technical skills, women inmates are trained in business development services so that they can create small businesses that would enable them to run successful enterprises.



Gender

One of the best practices in Mekelle prison is the priority given to female inmates. Although their numbers are small, the prison administration gives special focus to women. Almost 90% of the female inmates have access to different skill training opportunities before they leave the center.

Except a few women inmates who don't want to attend schools because of their age or they are above grade 10, almost all women are seriously attending formal education and other training activities given in the center. In nine out of the first ten cooperatives, women inmates are members of these cooperatives with some of them holding leadership positions.



Training and Education for Street Kids: A Better way for Reducing Juvenile Crime

The prison administration and the cooperative leaders pursued a plan for the establishment of a housing, training and production compound outside the prison walls to accommodate up to 500 street children in order to prevent them from becoming criminals.

The city of Mekelle has provided a plot of 30,000 square meters sufficient for a variety of workshops, an elementary school, a dispensary and a technical and vocational training center.

The project has completed construction of residential quarters and a training workshop that will initially accommodate 84 children.



Financial Empowerment of Prisoners

As the cooperatives are entering into a competitive business environment, they are required to be trained in the proper management of their material and financial resources. The cooperative societies in the Mekelle prison are also trained in the most common and basic business related practices before they obtain loans. While the credit officers in the sub branch are orienting the cooperatives on the financial delivery mechanism of the institution, a more advanced comprehensive financial education was conducted.

Under the project, the cooperatives have received training in business development services, accounting, governance, savings and credit, insurance and the management of small businesses. More importantly, the cooperatives were well acquainted with the necessary knowledge on the proper utilization of credit resources and the importance of savings and micro-insurance to cover main risk factors for their businesses.

Once they establish the cooperatives and develop their business plans, they become qualified for loans and other services. The prison office is also responsible for creating linkages with other organizations to market their products and services, and the promotion of their products to the public. Such harmony and integration among the stakeholders today is one of the reasons for the viability of the cooperatives and their financial success.

The prison cooperatives are all profitable; they pay reasonable salaries to their members, cover all their expenses and loans and have a margin for profits that they save for purposes of future growth.

Individual coop members that were receiving money from family and friends are now able to make remittances to support their families.

The DECSI Prison Branch

Financial inclusion reached the Mekelle Prison with the opening of the DECSI microfinance branch office within the prison compound. This enabled the prison cooperatives to access banking services, and prisoners were able to open savings accounts and make remittances to support their families outside the prison. For almost all prison inmates who were not previously exposed to banking operations, DECSI opened their eyes to ‘trusting’ a financial institution and depositing their earnings! Thus, trust building is one of the highlights of the financial inclusion program. A thorough project appraisal is conducted by the loan officers of DECSI alongside a one-week financial literacy program on savings, credit and micro-insurance. While only cooperatives can use the credit services, all the financial services such as savings and local remittance services are open for all inmates in the prison.

In addition, many cooperatives have opened collective accounts to accumulate funds for investment in new machinery or equipment. So far some 720 inmates hold savings accounts with the DECSI branch within the prison, and average savings are in excess 3,000 birr.

Once their activities and business plans were critically examined, DECSI started financing the cooperatives on a group guarantee basis with a commitment from the prison office to monitor their activities. So far a total of 26 cooperatives have submitted their requests for loans and 10 have already taken one amounting to 1,6 million birr and repaid 96% of the loans. Prison inmates have also saved a total of 2.27 million birr. Equally important, in the past, inmates were receiving money from relatives for essential expenses and now they are making significant remittances every month to support relatives and family members.

As a saving led institution, DECSI is focusing on areas of savings to motivate inmates to deposit part of their income in the form of savings for future investments. One of the new interventions added during the training program was micro-insurance to meet the needs of borrowers. A training manual was prepared on risk and insurance and was delivered to more than 103 cooperative leaders among whom 41 were women inmates.





Financial Literacy Training covering Savings, Credit and Microinsurance

Financial literacy training is provided to all members of prison cooperatives as a condition to qualify for loans. For the inmates, the training is not only theoretical, but also builds on the practical application of the key concepts taught, DECSI, has opened up a micro-finance branch within the prison premises.

Topics covered include:

Managing personal incomes: Defining personal priorities and budget, understanding short and medium term financial needs and planning accordingly. They discuss the value of maintaining a bank account and saving constantly. (The banked inmate population in Mekelle prison is 10 times higher than the national average!)

Savings: Co-op leaders are taught the importance of saving a fraction of income so that resources are accumulated for asset building and investments.

Credit: Good and bad practices in borrowing are discussed. Borrowing for asset building instead of borrowing for consumption is explained and individuals and co-op members discuss their potentials and aspirations.

Micro-insurance: Managing household and business risks, the function of insurance and how insurance can serve to enhance savings, serve as collateral for individuals and MSE businesses that may not get access to credit for lack of assets to pledge as collateral and provide security for the household and/or MSE businesses.

What is Microinsurance?

In developing countries, the vast majority of low-income households lack access to insurance and other forms of social protection, including health services. Low-income persons live in riskier environments than the rest of the population, are more vulnerable to various perils and are the least able to cope when crises do occur. It is the poor that are most in need of affordable and accessible insurance services.

Micro-insurance is an excellent tool for the protection of the livelihoods of the working poor and for savings mobilization. Traditional credit insurance protects the lender in the event of death of the insured borrower before the debt has been repaid in full. Client focused micro-insurance products available in Ethiopia also cover losses arising from accident and disability, illness and maternity. In addition to protecting the lender against default arising from the above-mentioned risks, micro-insurance also serves as excellent collateral for low-income borrowers who would otherwise not provide a guarantee to qualify for a loan.

The following simple example illustrates the dramatic access to insurance services can have on the life of poor people. In the absence of micro-insurance (crop insurance in this case), farmers would plant half of the seeds available to them and hold the other half so that they have seeds for the next planting season, if the harvest fails. If the harvest was good, farmers would have produced half of their potential output. If insured, farmers would have used all the seeds they have during the planting season. If the harvest turned poor, the insurer would provide seeds for the next planting season plus food for the farmer's subsistence until the next harvest. If the harvest were good, the farmer would have doubled his/her output, substantially contributing to food security and poverty alleviation.

Similarly, the benefit of micro-insurance in health, life and asset insurance can be argued strongly for low-income urban workers, women and youth engaged in MSME activities, etc.

Construction Work Completed by the Project:

The project supported the upgrading of and the construction of new existing buildings:



The clinic was upgraded and expanded



Two metal and woodwork training workshops have been constructed and equipped



A display room for various products of the prison co-ops has been constructed



A street children's quarter has been constructed and furnished



A banking branch for DECSI has been constructed and furnished

Living Conditions of Women in Mekelle Prison

The new facilities in women's compound include new kitchen area and playground for kids living with inmate mothers.





The quarters for women inmates have been furnished and a playground for the children of women prisoners also constructed.

Reflections from Prison Inmates...

"I have been sentenced to prison for ten years when you have nothing to do it is easy to become preoccupied with anger and frustration about your situation I had initially suffered from depression when I first arrived; I even tried to kill myself I was then informed about work opportunities offered by the prison and so I joined a cooperative involved in the production of building blocks very quickly my depression was replaced with work satisfaction Now the cooperative is working and paying back the credit we have taken from DECSI the cooperative will very soon start to make a profit."



Inmate Nigiste Weldu

"My experience of the situation when I first entered the prison was that it was unbearable I found that not having anything to do made my situation seem very bleak when we were offered the chance to work we received technical training inside prison and this allowed us to form a woodwork cooperative we took a 200,000 birr credit loan from DECSI and we are now running the business very successfully what I have learnt from this business experience is extremely valuable and will remain with me for the rest of my life."



Inmate Weyni Alem

"I entered prison because I belonged to a gang of thieves While I have been here I have managed to complete my high school education within the prison and am now a college student I am currently studying Marketing Management through distance education and will graduate next year; the salary I have been able to earn from working as a member of a cooperative has provided me with a salary; this allows me to cover my educational fees I am confident that when I am released from prison I will live a very different life and will no longer be a thief as I now have better options thanks to my educational experience here."



Inmate

"During my time as an inmate I have been studying for a diploma in law through long distance education I have also been engaged in a cooperative that produces building blocks with the money I earn from the cooperative I am able to cover my education I am also able to support my brothers and sisters by buying them educational resources such as pens and exercise books..."



Inmate Negash Abreha



Inmate Hilifti Gebrekiros

Hilifti Gebrekiros, aged 27, is a divorced mother with two children aged 8 and 6. She has been sentenced to 6 years in prison and has already served nine months. She was charged with issues related to producing false documents in relation to customs while working as a trader.

“While serving my prison sentence I decided to increase my skilled capacity by training in multiple different skills offered by the prison. I have been trained in woodwork as well as in business management, I am working as a cashier for an ‘Agricultural and Home Economics Products Cooperative’. Our cooperative already has a capital of ETB 18,000. I believe that my training here should enable me to set up a wood workshop once I have served my prison term my ambition is to be a responsible citizen and a good model for my kids.”



Inmate Zufan Gebre

Zufan is an inmate with an exceptional involvement in the Mekelle prison cooperative scheme. She is 18 years old and was a 10th grade student. She quit school and worked as a housemaid before being convicted of stealing from her employers.

“Before I entered the prison I was scared that it was going to be frightening. I am now realising that it’s

actually the opposite. After 2 months in the prison I was part of a cooperative trading household. I am currently the cooperative’s secretary and my responsibilities include recording cash and stock receipts, payments and preparing monthly transaction reports. The cooperative has two shops inside the prison. We have a capital of 20,000 birr, which is about 2000 birr per cooperative member. We are working hard to increase our capital so that we can supply a variety of good quality products to inmates. I am also being trained as a hairdresser. I see a bright future free of crime and full of employment opportunities due to the prison training. I have plans to manage a small retail business, continue my education, have my own house, a family and lead a happy life.”



Inmate Kiros Atey

Kiros is in her twenties and has a son aged 3 years living with her inside the prison. She has been sentenced for five years for embezzling government money as a government cashier. At the time of her arrest she had a diploma and was in the process of pursuing her first degree.

What distinguishes inmate Kiros from other inmates is that she is an expert in hairdressing and has been able to provide training to other female inmates, which has provided her with income generating opportunities inside prison. She currently earns 200-300 birr (USD 11-17) per month allowing her to support herself and her child. So far, Kiros has trained 64 inmates in hairdressing.

“While in prison I have received training in electrical works, plumbing, woodwork, and poultry farming. I am very happy to say that I have achieved certificates in all of them. I have learnt a lot while being here and am now looking forward to having a hairdressing business as a means of income and career satisfaction when I am released. I look forward to offering employment and training opportunities to others.”

Inmate Almaz Gebriel, 23, was a government employee working as a cashier and was sentenced to 5 years in prison stealing from her employers



Inmate Almaz Gebriel

While serving her prison sentence, she joined a cooperative of 10 members known as 'Lemlem Raya Home Economics Products Cooperative'. The cooperative has since been able to fully repay the initial capital loan from the prison center and has been therefore eligible for increased credit loans to help build the enterprise. Almaz has also been able to earn her diploma in accounting via distance education while in the prison

"I have been amazed to discover how prison life is like a university. I have made a dedicated effort to take advantage of all the various skills training offered by the prison. I have earned certificates in plumbing, woodworking, pig rearing and beauty salon training. The cooperative experience has allowed me to earn an income while in prison. My life has become focused on productive activities such as preparing saleable items for my cooperative such as groundnuts, fried barley ('kollo'), ground pulses, etc. I am currently the finance officer for the cooperative and manage all financial transactions. I feel that my life has changed in so many ways and I am certain that my training experience will help me to be successful when I leave the prison."

Having accomplished skilled competence in various disciplines Alma is determined to open a metal and wood workshop with her brothers by borrowing from one of the credit institutions.

Gebre Mariam Assefa is 36, married and a father of a 7-year old child. He was a driver and was sentenced for 10 years for diverting cement for his own benefit. He is currently a cashier of the Pagume Hollow Concrete Block making cooperative, which supplies concrete blocks for the construction of various ILO/IDC supported projects in the prison as well as clients in town.



Gebre Mariam Assefa

G. Mariam is an active participant in the various prison activities and has involved himself in many training activities such as business management, hollow concrete block making, embroidery, weaving and cattle fattening. He has received certificates in most of these training programs.

The cooperative in which G. Mariam is a member has 10 members (1 female and 9 male) and was the first to get credit of 80,000 birr (USD 4,500) from DECSI. The co-op has fully repaid the loan and now has enough capital to run as a profit making business.

He says, *"I have benefited as a cooperative member as a result of all the various training in many diverse skills. I am enjoying being continually engaged with productive activities. I earn 400 birr (USD 22) per month. After I am released I plan to open a micro business and be a successful businessman. I am very thankful for the training I have received and the experience I have gained in this prison."*

Gebre Mariam has been rewarded for his good behaviour inside prison with the privilege of living independently. He lives outside the main gate of the prison close to the cooperative.



Inmate Rigbe Kidane

Inmate Rigbe Kidane is a 43 year old married woman with 3 kids. She was charged with abuse of authority and sentenced to 8 years in prison. She already has a bachelor's degree in accounting and has extensive experience working in the public sector. Rigbe has undertaken various training courses and has also engaged herself in training others. She is one of the 12 core committee members of the center representing the interests of female inmates.

“I have made an effort to participate as much as I can in the training offered by the prison. I am a member of the prison's Pagume Construction Materials Cooperative, which produces hollow concrete blocks. The cooperative has recently won a prestigious bid to produce and supply blocks for a building project financed by the International Labour Organization (ILO). I have also achieved certification in metal and woodwork, hairdressing and electrical work. I really enjoy training other inmates and sharing my professional skills in bookkeeping, budgeting and auditing.”

By virtue of her educational level and experience she is playing a leading role in the cooperative, which has a capital of 50,000 birr. She provides bookkeeping training to executive committee members of prison cooperatives.

When Rigbe was asked about her ambition after her release she said: *“I have learnt a lot from my stay in the prison. It is a learning ground. I am trying to be a productive citizen. My dream is to combine further education and work in one or two of the skilled disciplines I have trained in. I am also planning to continue my education by studying chartered accounting (ACCA).”*



Inmate Tiblets Amare

Tiblets Amare is a 27-year old woman from a rural area in Tigray region. She is a married woman and a mother of 4 children. Her 2-year old son lives with her in the prison. She was sentenced to one year and eight months for kicking another woman. She is illiterate and until now has had no opportunity to attend school due to her early marriage.

“I have struggled to find time to attend school inside the prison because of the demands of being a mother. I must engage myself in productive activities to support my children at home. I have managed to dedicate some time to producing cotton yarn as a member of a cooperative. I earn an average income of 300 birr (USD 17) per month. With this I have been able to regularly send household provisions to my children at home. The experience at Makelle Prison has taught me a lot. I will, in no way, engage in offensive activities in the future, instead I want to serve my family and my community in the best way I can.”

Mekelle Prison Project is a Replicable Model

The Mekelle prison center is a model prison unit because of its pioneering approach to skills development, enterprise building, collaboration and rehabilitation among prison inmates. The centre's exceptional experiences can be easily replicated as best practices in other areas. The prison center has transformed itself into being a correctional center where inmates have access to transformational skill building and income generating opportunities.

The Mekelle Prison Center has become a center of excellence and learning. The successful outcome of socio-economically transformed inmates can be attributed to a combination of factors that include a good policy environment, innovative design of skill building cooperative programs, competent prison staff and administration to implement the programs, high involvement of stakeholders, and the Ethiopian government's commitment to the constitutional rights of prisoners in line with international human rights conventions. This successful combination of pro-active factors is responsible for radically changing the lives of many prisoners.

The consequent behavioural transformation of the inmates is ultimately responsible for the reduction of potential crimes committed in the community and the country. Recognition must be given to the Ethiopian government and the regional government of Tigray and its determination to support the rehabilitation of inmates. Based on the constitutional rights of prisoners, the regional government of Tigray has issued a new law that allows prisoners to form cooperatives of their own and engage in income generating activities. This provides an impressive range of opportunities for inmates to participate in skill building programs and be optimistic about creating a positive future.



Prison Spirit, Before and After Co-ops

There were some handicraft activities available to inmates before the cooperative law of the region was issued and supported by the implementation of business process reengineering in the Mekelle Prison Center. Most of the prisoners had few opportunities to engage in any activities and were consequently very frustrated and depressed. Although some inmates had access to skill training the income generated was very negligible due to poor access to employment inside the prison centre.

The mood of the prison population changed to being dynamically productive and optimistic once the prison administration introduced skill training programs in line with the new law that offered opportunities for all the prisoners to organize themselves as members of cooperatives and engage in income generating activities. The call for the stakeholders to join the program and their positive responses has inspired prisoners to actively participate and benefit from the opportunities offered by the skill building programs. Most of the cooperatives in the prison are now engaged in various production activities. A large market has been created in the prison center for the various items produced by inmate cooperatives including traditional clothes, wood and metal products, good quality cobble stones, fattened animals, bread, etc. A good amount of income is also obtained from the sale of these products and is distributed among cooperative members. This dynamic activity is inspiring many prisoners to join training programs. A new spirit of competition and optimism has been created among the prisoners due to the increasing opportunities and interventions made by the capacity building program of Mekelle prison.



International Reviews on Prison Activities





Conclusions and Remarks by Stakeholders

The lessons learnt by Mekelle prison Centre are particularly useful wherever conflict, crime and poverty present challenges to society. The rehabilitation of prisoners has also been seen to help address mass youth unemployment, especially for young women. The provision of social, economic and skills development content offered by the prison centre has created huge opportunities to help overcome gender imbalance.

There are several programs underway in the prison. There is a major skill capacity building program for the inmates. There is also a program being prepared to give skill related trainings to potential offenders in the city. A new boarding school is under construction to give short-term training to street kids identified as potential criminal offenders. This will largely include children sleeping in the streets with limited access to opportunities to improving their lives due to a disconnect with their families and relatives.

The prison transformational process is creating new skilled labor forces that can easily fit into the existing working environment in Ethiopia. Inmates are trained in income generating skills and in business development discipline. Inmates are now much more familiar with how to create new businesses than in the past. Most of the inmates have also

clearly understood the importance of productively working in cooperatives to pool resources and successfully compete in the markets. A new form of partnership has been pioneered among the stakeholders to bring holistic behavioral changes to the lives of the inmates.

Such changes will result in positive behavioral transformation of the inmates once they have been released from prison and will therefore help to significantly reduce the number of crimes in the community with the end result being a greater amount of peace and stability in society. According to the Mekelle prison, only 16 were returned to the prison out of a total of 1416 released prisoners during one year. This is an indication that the potential for crime is substantially reducing once the prisoners have received skills training. It has been consistently observed that once the inmate has achieved a productive capacity for generating income to feed and sustain themselves and their families. The likelihood of becoming repeat offenders once they have been released is dramatically reduced.







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የትከበሩ አቶ ሀዱሽ ዘነበ
የትግራይ ክ/ብ መንግስት የጸጥታ አስተዳደር ቢሮ ኃላፊ



በክልሉ በሚገኙ ማ/ቤቶች በብዙ ሺህ የሚቆጠሩ ወንጀል ፈፅመው የታሰሩ ታራሚዎች ይገኛሉ፤ ከሶስት ዓመት በፊት ባደረግነው ጥናት አብዛኞቹ ታራሚዎች ወጣቶች መሆናቸው የወንጀሉ መንስኤ ደግሞ የስራ አጥነት መሆኑ ይህን ከድህነት የሚመነጨውን ችግር ለመፍታት ደግሞ ታራሚዎቻችን በሞያና ስነ ልቦና አሰልጥኝ አምራች ዜጋ አድርገን ለማውጣት የሚያስችለን ዕቅድ አወጣን የተወሰኑ ስልጠናዎች ሰጥተን በማህበር አደራጅተን ስራ ላይ እንዲሰማሩ በማድረግ አምራች ዜጋ መፍጠር ጀመርን ከደደቢትማይክሮ ፋይናንስ፣ክቲቪቴ፣ክግብርና ኮሌጅ ከቴክኒክ ኮሌጅ ጋር በመሆን ስልጠናዎች እንሰጥ ነበር፤ ጠባብ የነበረው የስልጠና እንቅስቃሴያችን ሰፊ እንዲል ሃሳብ አቀረብን ፕሮጀክት ቀርጾን ዘዐን /አይኤልኦ/ ጋብዘን አወንታዊ ምላሽ አገኘን። ዘዐን ከሌሎች ማለት IDCO ጋር በመሆን የተወሰኑ የነበሩ ማሸነሪዎች እንዲያድጉ፤ ጠባብ የነበረ የስልጠና እንቅስቃሴያችን ሰፊ እንዲል ባደረገልን እገዛ ሰፋፊ ፕሮጀክቶች ተቀርጾው ተግባራዊ እንዲሆኑ አድርገዋል።

1. ለማረሚያ ቤት አመራርና ከፍተኛ መኮንኖች በኢትዮጵያ የሥራ አመራር ኢንስቲትዩት ለሁለት ሳምንት በተለያዩ አርእስቶች ስልጠና እንዲሰጡ በማድረግ የአመራራችን አቅም ግንባታ በማሳደግ ከፍተኛ አስተዋጽኦ አድርገዋል።

2. በማረሚያ ቤቱን በማቴሪያል በማጠናከር የተለያዩ የቢሮ ቁሳቁሶች እንዲሟሉ ተደርጓል።

የተሰሩ ፕሮጀክቶች

- ዘመናዊ የሆኑ የወርክሾፕ/ውድ ዎርክ ሜታል ዎርክ/ ህንጻዎች ተገንብተዋል በቂ የሆኑ ማሸነሪዎች ተገዝተዋል
- የነበረውን ከ1ኛ እስከ 10ኛ ት/ቤት በመጸሃፍት በኮምፒውተር በቢሮ ቁሳቁሶች ተሟልተውለት በቂ የሆነ የመደበኛ ትምህርት አገልግሎት እንዲሰጥ ተደርጓል።
- የነበረው ክለኒክ ተጨማሪ ህንጻዎች በመስራት እንዲሰፋፋና በቂ አገልግሎት እንዲሰጥ ተደርጓል።

ፕሮጀክቱ ለሴት ታራሚዎች ትልቅ ትኩረት በመስጠት የነበሩን ሴት ታራሚዎች በሙሉ /100%/ በፕሮጀክቱ ተጠቃሚ ሆነዋል።

አጠቃላይ የፕሮጀክቱ ፋይዳ ሲታይ ማረሚያ ቤቶች ስራ ፈጣሪና አምራች ዜጋ የሚፈጥሩ ተቋማት መሆናቸው የሚያሳዝገራችን ድህነት ለማጥፋት በምታደርገው ርብርብና በአምስት አመቱ የዕድገትና ትራንስፎርሜሽን ዕቅድ ማረሚያ ቤቶች የራሳቸው ድርሻ እንዲወጡ የሚያደርግ፤

- ሌሎች ማረሚያ ቤቶችና አገሮች ማረሚያ ቤቶች ስራ ፈጣሪዎች መሆኑ አንደሚችሉ እንደ ሞዴልና ማስተማሪያነት የሚያገለግል መሆኑ።
- በማረሚያ ቤት የተለያዩ ስልጠናዎች በመስጠት ዜጎች ከማረሚያ ቤት ወጥተው በተለያዩ ስራ በመሰረማራት ራሳቸው እንዲችሉ የሚደርግና የወንጀል መቀነስ በኩልም የራሱ ትልቅ ድርሻ ያለው ፕሮጀክት መሆኑ

ስለዚህ ፕሮጀክቱ ፋይዳው ትልቅ ነው እስከ አሁን ድረስ ከላይ ሰልጣኞች አሰልጥኝናል ለሚቀጥሉት አመታት ግን በየአመቱ ከ 1500 በላይ ማሰልጠን የሚችል ፕሮጀክት ነው።

የአቶ ፈረደ የሺወንድም የትግራይ ብሔራዊ መንግስት ማረሚያ ቤቶች ኮሚሽነር - መልእክት

As a cooperation we are very much engaged in economic development and social development for the most vulnerable people. I think in Mekelle prison we have found one such group of vulnerable people, not just because they are in prison, not just because they lost their freedom but also because for the majority of the prisoners they committed a crime related to poverty and a lack of opportunity. So they have been punished twice.

I was first here in 2011, I saw the activities and it was demonstrated to me what the capabilities of the prison project are. It was then that we decided to support. We have seen the positive results and they are very interesting. Now I see more cooperation, more participation, more activity, and so the project has dramatically improved. The workshops are in regular use and the people are working better, they are also working in greater comfort and safety.

I also see something that is not related to work or job creation, which is very important. I saw how a space has been created for children as some inmates unfortunately come here with very young children. It is crucial that the children have the right to play even if their mother may have done something wrong. So I am very happy that an area purposefully created for the playful interaction between mothers and their children has been achieved.

I think the real challenge now is that other prisons in Ethiopia and other prisons all over the world, not just in developing countries, can replicate this model. There is something extraordinary happening in Mekelle Prison. I will be happy in Italy when we can follow Ethiopia's example in Makelle prison. I think this is the real challenge- to transform a prison into a place where people are not just punished but also rehabilitated.

*Mr. Fabio Melloni,
Director of Italian Development Cooperation in Ethiopia. Remark*

Over the past 24 months, the ILO has been honoured to partner with the Mekelle Prison Administration, DECSI and Italian Development Cooperation in the formulation and implementation of the Mekelle Prison Capacity Building Project. The project has turned out to be one of the most effective intervention support we have executed in the recent past. We have kept within the project's time frame and we have jointly delivered all the results. For example, all the 5 planned building construction and upgrades as well as equipment for training purposes have been completed and delivered and are now in use, including the quarters for street children. Inmates and prison officers have received training relevant to their mission; all have received financial literacy training on managing household incomes, savings, credit and microinsurance. We are particularly pleased that women prison inmates that numbered over 550 at the beginning of the project have been trained, rehabilitated and many have been released, and are in better social and economic standing because of the training they have received.

The project has indeed changed lives of the beneficiaries. The inmates who used to expect support from their families are now the ones providing financial support to their families. We are talking about transforming the lives of people, their families and their communities. It is real, it is not something academic, but people's lives have been positively changed. I wish to congratulate the prisoners who have fully participated and empowered themselves with skills and financial knowledge to be able to manage their livelihoods successfully both while in prison and back at home. Another lesson to draw from the project is that building prison walls alone does not reduce crime but empowering women and youth that commit criminal activities for lack of economic and social support does. We hope this model will be scaled up in Tigray Regional State, the rest of Ethiopia and beyond.

We need to build on and consolidate this success drawing the key lessons from the way this project has been implemented so that we can continue to have similar success stories in other prisons. The commitment, support and leadership provided by the Federal Government, the Tigray Regional Government and the Prisons Administration is such an important lesson. The commitment of the donor, the Italian Development Cooperation (IDC), who not only funded the project but also provided technical support and guidance to identify what we need to do differently to achieve better results.

*George Okutho,
Director, ILO Country Office for Ethiopia and Somalia. Remark*

Handing Over Ceremony...

Mekelle, Ethiopia – In the presence of Ato Hadis Zenebe, Head of Security and Administration, representing His Excellency the Tigray Regional President, the ILO Director of Regional Office, Mr. George Okutho and the Director of Italian Development Cooperation (IDC) Office of Addis Ababa, Mr. Fabio Melloni, the handing over ceremony of the Project 'EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE IN PRISON THROUGH SKILL AND INCLUSIVE FINANCE SUPPORT WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON WOMEN PRISONERS' was held on Thursday, 27 June 2013, in the Mekelle Prison Compound.

Started in 2012, the project has been implemented by ILO in the past year, through a 650,000 Euro grant made available by the Italian Development Cooperation to foster women economic empowerment at Mekelle Prison and WISE (Organisation for Women in Self-Employment). The Italian intervention in support of Mekelle's inmates came after previous similar experiences undertaken by IDC in other countries such as Lebanon and Afghanistan.



The underlying vision of the initiative is to create a prison which is aimed at the rehabilitation of inmates through an empowering and learning environment and where prisoners are conceived as citizens who will be helped to reintegrate themselves into the society and to be able to contribute to social and community wellbeing and development.

The project has focused on empowering all of the female inmates as well as a number of male prisoners through education, skills training, financial literacy, gender and women empowerment, business development skills, cooperative management as well as opportunities to access financial services for savings, loans and microinsurance to engage in economically useful activities, with the collaboration of implementing partners, among which the Regional Prison Administration and Dedebit Microfinance Institution (DECSI) played a key role in the success of the project.

Where prison inmates were relying on support from family and friends, now inmates are making money transfers to family members to support them with school fees, living expenses and other support. Hundreds also save significant sums from their earnings in a saving account with the DECSI branch within the prison. The initiative has enabled the development of 26 active cooperatives that have established successful businesses and empowering opportunities for prison inmates and released prisoners.

All the efforts made by the prison administration, with the support of the regional authorities, and the encouraging results achieved in changing inmates' living conditions, place Makalle on the right track to become a successful model for Ethiopia and Africa.

*Italy and ILO for empowerment of Mekelle inmates
Handing Over Ceremony, 27 June 2013*





የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት

ማረሚያ ቤቶችን መገንባት በራሱ ወንጀልን ለመቀነስ አይጠቅምም በተለይም ከድህነት የተነሳ ትንንሽ የወንጀል ድርጊቶችን ፈጽመው ለእሥር የተዳረጉ ብዙሃን ሴትና ወንድ እስረኞችን መልሶ በማቋቋም ሆነ ህይወታቸውን ለማሻሻል አይጠቅምም፡፡ በመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት 80 በመቶ የሚሆኑ ወጣት ሴትና ወንድ እሥረኞች ትንንሽ የወንጀል ድርጊቶችን ፈጽመው እስከ ስድስት አመት የተፈረደባቸው ናቸው፡፡ በእንዲህ ያለ ሁኔታ ላይ የሚገኝ ማረሚያ ቤት ዓይነተኛ እርምጃ የሚሆነው ታራሚዎች የትምህርት፣ የሙያ ሥልጠና የሚያገኙበት እንዲሁም የብድር አገልግሎት ተጠቃሚ በመሆን ኢኮኖሚያዊ ጠቀሜታ ያለው የንግድ እንቅስቃሴ ላይ የሚሰማሩበት አሰራር መፍጠር ነው፡፡ በሰሜናዊ ኢትዮጵያ በመቀሌ ከተማ የሚገኘው ማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደር ለታራሚዎች የመልሶ ማቋቋም እና የሙያ ሥልጠናዎች እንዲሰጡ፣ በእሥር ላይ ለሚገኙና ለተፈቱ ታራሚዎች የስራ እድል እና የገቢ ምንጭ የከፈቱ 31 ጠንካራ የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት እንዲፈጠሩ ያስቻለ የቁጠላና የብድር አገልግሎት እንዲኖር እርምጃ ወስዷል፡፡



ፕሮጀክቱ

በትግራይ ክልላዊ መንግሥት ልማታዊ ሚና እንዲሁም ለመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት ምስጋና ይሁንና በመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት የተመዘገበው ስኬት በክልሉ እንዲሁም በመላ አገሪቱ ምሳሌ የሚሆን ነው፡፡ የማረሚያ ቤቱ አስተዳደር ታራሚዎች ማህበራዊና የባህሪ ለውጥ እንዲያመጡ ሁኔታዎችን አመቻችቷል፡፡ ትምህርት፣ የሙያ መደብር፣ የብድርና ቁጠላ አገልግሎትና የሂሳብ አጠቃቀምና አያያዝ ትምህርትና ደህነትን በማጥፋትና ዘላቂ የገቢ ምንጭን በመፍጠር ረገድ አይነተኛ ሚና እንዳላቸው በማመን የማረሚያ ቤቱ አስተዳደር በህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት፣ በጥቃቅንና አነስተኛ ቁጠላዎችና ለጥቃቅንና አነስተኛ መድሀኖች አማካኝነት ጥሩ የሚባሉ የገቢ ማግኛ ሥራዎችን ለመፍጠር ተንቀሳቅሷል፡፡ የታራሚ ሴቶችና ወንዶች ሕይወትና እሴት መሻሻል ታራሚዎቹ በማህበረሰብ ውስጥ ስኬታማ አባል ይሆኑ ዘንድ ሥለሚኖረው ጠቀሜታ እንዲረዱ በማሰብ ለማረሚያ ቤቱ ሃላፊዎች የአስተዳደርና አሰራር ሥልጠና ተሰጥቷል፡፡

በአሁኑ ወቅት የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት ማዕከል መሠረተ ትምህርት፣ የህብረት ሠራ ማህበራት አስተዳደር፣ የሂሳብ አያያዝ፣ የሙያ ና የንግድ ሃሳብን የሚመለከቱ ሥልጠና አገልግሎቶችን ይሰጣል፡፡

ደደቢት የብድር እና የቁጠላ ተቋም(DECSE) ፕሮጀክቱን በፋይናንስ አገልግሎትና በፋይናንስ ትምህርት ደግፏል፡፡ ILO እና IDCO ደግሞ ከላይ ለተጠቀሱት የአቅም ግንባታ ተግባራት የቱክኒክ እና

የገንዘብ ድጋፍ አድርገዋል፡፡ በተመሳሳይ ለሥልጠና ማዕከላት ግንባታ ቁሳቁስ

ማሟያ የገንዘብ ድጋፍ አድርገዋል፡፡ የእነዚህ ተቋማት ድጋፍ ዋና አላማ ሥርዓተ ጾታን መሰረት ያደረገ ማህበራዊና ኢኮኖሚያዊ እድገት (ማብቃት) ማምጣት ነው፡፡ ስለዚህ የሴት ታራሚዎች መብት እየተተኮረበት እና እየተከበረ ነው፡፡ የሙያ ሥልጠናና የፋይናንስ ትምህርት የሚያገኙበት እድል ተፈጥሮላቸው በጥሩ ሁኔታ ከማህበረሰቡ ጋር ተቀላቅለው ከወንጀልና ከድህነት ነጻ የሆነ ህይወት ይኖራቸው ዘንድ ሁኔታዎች ተመቻችተዋል፡፡

ፕሮጀክቱ የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደርን አቅም በመገንባት፣ የታራሚዎችን ህይወት በማሻሻል እና በአገሪቱ ውስጥና በሌሎች ማረሚያ ቤቶች ምሳሌ(ማሳያ) በመፍጠር ረገድ ያስቀመጠውን እቅድ አሳክቷል፡፡





የትግራይ ክልል ማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደር

ራዕይ

ታራሚዎች በአጥር ውስጥ ዘግቶ ማስቀመጥ ከእስር በሚለቀቁበት ወቅት ሃላፊነት የሚሰማው ዜጋ ይሆን ዘንድ አይጠቅምም፡፡ ይልቁንም ጠቃሚ የሚሆነው አካሄድ ታራሚዎች ትምህርት፣ የሙያ ሥልጠናና የራሳቸውን ንግድ የሚያቋቁሙበትና የሚያስተዳድሩበትን እድል ማመቻቸት ነው፡፡

ዓላማ

- የማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደሩን የአመራር ክህሎት ማሻሻል፣የፈጠራ ሃሳቦችንና መልካም ተሞክሮዎችን ማጋራት፤
- በእስር ላይ ሳሉ የእስር ጊዜአቸውንም ጨርሰው በሚወጡ ጊዜ ማህበራዊና ኢኮኖሚያዊ ጠቀሜታ ያለው እንቅስቃሴ ላይ ይሰማሩ ዘንድ ልዩ ትኩረት ሴቶች ላይ አድርጎ ዘላቂ ክህሎትን፣ የንግድ ሃሳብ ማጎልበትንና የፋይናንስ ትምህርትን ለታራሚዎች ማስተዋወቅ፤
- ክልሉንና ከክልሉ ውጪ ያለውን ማህበረሰብ ታግቦ ያደረጉ ቁሳቁሶችንና አገልግሎቶችን የሚያመርት ባለቤትነቱም የሚተዳደረውም በታራሚዎች የሆነ ጠንካራ የህብረት ሥራ ማህበር ማቋቋም፤ የሴቶችን ንቁ ተሳትፎ ማጠናከር፤
- የእውቀቱና የክህሎቱ ሽግግር ከተደረገ እንዲሁም የስራ እድል ከተፈጠረ በኋላ በታራሚዎች የእለት ተእለት ህይወት እንዲሁም ባህሪ ላይ የሚታዩ ለውጦችን መከታተልና መመዝገብ፤
- ማረሚያ ቤቶችን ለመምራት ፣ ትንንሽ የወንጀል ድርጊቶችን ለመቀነስና በተለይም እገዛና እድል በማጣት ወደ ወንጀል ለሚገቡ ወጣት ሴትና ወንዶች ዘላቂ ሥራ ለመፍጠርና የሥራ ፈጠራ እድሎችን ለማመቻቸት የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደርን ተሞክሮ ማካፈል ፤
- በማረሚያ ቤቶች የጾታ እኩልነት እንዲኖር ፣ ሴቶችም በኢኮኖሚ የበቂ እንዲሆኑ ማድረግ፤
- ለመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት ስኬታማነት ዋነኛ መሠረት የሆነው ማረሚያ ቤቶች ልዩ ፈጠራን መሠረት ያደረጉ ፕሮግራሞችን ይተገበሩ ዘንድና እንደ ትምህርት ፣ጤና ፣ሰራተኛና ማህበራዊ ቢሮ እንዲሁም መቀሌ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ፣ MSE ኤጀንሲ ፣ TVET፣ደደቢት የብድርና የቁጠባ ተቋም፣ የአለም የስራ ድርጅት ፣ IDC ና ከሌሎችም በክልሉ ከሚገኙ ባድርሻ አካላት ጋር ማረሚያ ቤቶች አጋርነትን እንዲፈጥሩ የሚያበረታታው የመንግሥት ዳይሬክቲቭ መተግበር ነው፡፡

የማረሚያ ቤቱ ፕሮግራም አዎንታዊ ተጽእኖ

የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት ውጤታማ የመልሶ ማቋቋም ተግባራት በታራሚዎች ላይ ጉልህ የባህሪ ለውጥ አምጥቷል፡፡ በማዕከሉ ተግባራዊ የተደረገው የአቅም ግንባታ ፕሮግራም ለታራሚዎች ፣ለማዕከሉ፣ለማህበረሰቡና ለክልሉ ዘርፈ ብዙ ጠቀሜታዎችን አስገኝቷል፡፡ ታራሚዎች አዳዲስ የሙያ ሥልጠናዎችን ይዘው ፣ የመቀጠር እድላቸውን ከፍ አድርገው ፣ ከማህበረሰቡ ጋር የመጣጣምና የመቀላቀል እድላቸውን አስፈተው ወደ ህብረተሰቡ እየተመለሱ ነው፡፡ ሠላማዊና ፍሬያማ ህይወት የመምራት እድላቸውን በተመሳሳይ መልኩ ሠፊ ስለሆነ ወንጀል እየቀነሰ፣ ደግሞ ወደ ማረሚያ ቤት የሚመለሱ ታራሚዎች ቁጥር እየቀነሰ ነው፡፡ በመኖሪያ አካባቢያቸው ሠላምና ጸጥታ በማስፈን በኮሚኒቲ ፖሊስንግ ተሳታፊ የሆኑ የቀድሞ

ታራሚዎች የታዩባቸው የተለያዩ አጋጣሚዎችም አሉ፡፡ ታራሚዎች በውጤታማና ፍሬአማ ተግባር ላይ ሲሰማሩ ማረሚያ ማዕከሉ በታራሚዎች መካከል ከሚታየው የስነምግባር ችግር መቀነስ ይጠቅማል፡፡



ደደቢት የብድርና የቁጠባ ተቋም

ደደቢት በአሁኑ ወቅት አንድ ሚሊዮን አባዎችን የሚደግፍ የንግድ እንቅስቃሴዎች ላይ ይሰማሩ ዘንድ በሚሊዎኖች የሚቆጠሩ የትግራይ ክልል ኗሪዎችን አብቅቷል። ይህ ተቋም እንቅስቃሴ የጀመረው በአራት ሚሊዮን ብር ካፒታል ሲሆን በአሥራ ሰባት አመታት ውስጥ ትልቅ ደረጃ ላይ ከሚገኙ የፋይናንስ ተቋማት ተርታ ማሰለፍ ችሏል። ጠቅላላ ሀብቱ ከ2.5 ሚሊዮን ብር ሲበልጥ 1.5 ቢሊዮን ብር እንዲቆጠብ ንቅናቄ መፍጠር ችሏል። ደደቢት ከ4መቶ ሺህ በላይ ደንበኛ ተበዳሪዎችና 5 መቶ ሃያ ሺህ በላይ አሰቀማጮች አሉት። ከአስቀማጮቹ መካከል 28 ሺህ የሚሆኑት ህጻናት ሲሆኑ 60 በመቶ የሚሆኑት የተቋሙ ደንበኞች ሴቶች ናቸው። የተቋሙ ብድር የማስመለስ ምጣኔም 98 በመቶ ነው። በማህበረሰቡ ውስጥ ካሉ የብድርና የቁጠባ ኮሚቴዎች ጀምሮ እስከ ዳይሬክተሮች ቦርድ ድረስ በደደቢት የብድርና ቁጠባ ተቋም ሴቶችና ወጣቶች ተወክለዋል። ከዚህ ባሻገርም ለሴት ሥራ ፈጣሪዎች በከተማ አካባቢ ለሚኖሩ ወጣቶች ታስቦ የተዘጋጁ ልዩ አገልግሎቶች አሉ። በገጠና አካባቢዎች ደግሞ መሬት አልባ የሆኑ ወጣት ሴትና ወንዶች ልዩ የተለያዩ ሁኔታዎችን ያገናዘቡ የብድር አገልግሎቶች ይሠጣቸዋል። የከተማ የብድር አሠጣጥ ሥርዓትም ወጣቶች ያለምንም ዋስትና በነፍስወከፍ አሥር ሺህ ብር የመጀመሪያ ዙር ብድር እንዲያገኙ ይፈቅዳል። ይህ የሆነው ሥራ አጥ ለሆኑ ሴቶችና ለወጣት ሥራ ፈጣሪዎች እድል ለመፍጠር ነው። በአሁኑ ወቅት 38

በመቶ የሚሆኑት ተበዳሪዎች ከ18-27 የዕድሜ ክልል ውስጥ የሚገኙ ሲሆኑ እነዚህ ተበዳሪዎች ከአጠቃላይ የተቋሙ አገልግሎት 71 በመቶውን ይይዛሉ። ደደቢት አነስተኛ ብድር ወይም ሌላ የፋይናንስ አገልግሎት ብድሩን የሚፈልጉና ሊጠቀሙበት የሚችሉ መሰረታዊ መብት እንደሆነ ያምናል። ፕሮጀክቶች አቅምና ለኢኮኖሚ እሴት መጨመር እስከቻሉ ድረስ ደደቢት ማንኛውንም የማህበረሰብ አልያም የግለሰብ ሃሳቦችን ይደግፋል። በተመሳሳይ ይህ የማረሚያ ቤት ታራሚዎችንም ያካትታል። መጀመሪያ ተቋሙ በማረሚያ ቤቶች የንግድ እንቅስቃሴዎችን ማስተዳደር የሚችሉ የህብረት ስራ ማህበራት መኖራቸውንና ለታራሚዎች አስፈላጊውን የክህሎት ሥልጠና መስጠትና ድጋፍ ማድረግ የሚችሉ ቁርጠኛ ታራሚ ሃላፊዎች መኖራቸውን ካረጋገጠ በኋላ ለታራሚዎች የጥቃቅንና አነስተኛ የብድርና ቁጠባ አገልግሎት መሰጠት ችሏል።

ደደቢትና የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደር በማረሚያ ቤቱ የሚገኘውንና በሥራ ላይ ያልዋለውን ሰፊ የሰው ሃይል የክልሉ ውጤታማ የሰው ሃይል ለማድረግ ተስማምተዋል። በደደቢት የሥራ ካፒታል አቅራቢነት ታራሚዎች የተለያዩ ክህሎቶች ሥልጠና አግኝተዋል። ከደደቢት የሥራ ካፒታል የተበደሩት የህብረት የስራ ማህበራት ትርፋማ ሆነው ብድራቸውን ሙሉ በሙሉ በመመለስ ላይ ይገኛሉ።

የትግራይ ክልላዊ መንግሥት

የሰሜናዊ ኢትዮጵያ ክፍል የሆነው የትግራይ ክልል አሥገራሚ የመልክዓ ምድር አቀማመጥና የታደለና የሚስብ ባህላዊ እሴት ያለው ነው። ትግራይ የጥንታዊት ኢትዮጵያ ሥልጣኔ ማዕከል ነው። የአክሱማዊት ሥርወ መንግሥት ጊዜ ከወጥ ፍልፍል ድንጋይ የተሠሩ ሀውልቶች፣ መሣለሚያዎች፣ የድንጋይ ፍልፍል ቤተክርስቲያናት፣ መቃብሮችና ቤተመንግሥቶች ከሶስት ሺህ አመታት በፊት የነበረውን የጥንታዊት ትግራይ ቀደምት ሥልጣኔ ያንጸባርቃሉ። የኢትዮጵያ አልፋቤት(ፊደላት) የአክሱም ሥልጣኔ ነጸብራቅ ነው። የአክሱም ብልጽግና ከግሪስ ፣ግብጽ ፣ቤዛንታይን ፣ፐርሺያን እና ህንድ ጋር የነበረ የንግድ ትስስር ውጤት ነው።



በፌዴራልና በክልል መንግሥት የተጣለ ጠንካራ መሠረት

ከተወሰኑ ዓመታት በፊት የኢትዮጵያ መንግሥት በአገሪቱ ውስጥ ያሉ ማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደሮች ወጪ የሚቀንስና ብቃት ያለው አፈጻጸም ሊያመጡ የሚችሉ አዳዲስ የአስተዳደር ሃሳቦችን ይዘው እንዲቀርቡ ትዕዛዝ ሰጥቶ ነበር። የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደርም ታራሚዎችን የክህሎት ባለቤት የሚያደርግ ፣ የራሳቸውን የገቢ ምንጭ እንዲፈጥሩና ታርመው ለህግ የሚገዙ ጥሩ ዜጎች እንዲሆኑ የሚያስችል ፕሮጀክት ቀርጾ አቀረበ። የዚህ ዓይነት አካሄድ በተለያዩ አገራት የሚተገበር ቢሆንም የመቀሌው ማረሚያ ቤት በሶስት ገጽታዎች የተለዩ ሃሳቦችን ያያዘ ነው።

- ታራሚዎች ራሱን በቻለ ኢንተርፕራይዝ ደረጃ ሊያስተዳድሩት የሚችሉት የአምራቾች የህብረት ስራ ማህበራት እንዲመሠርቱ ይበረታታሉ። እነዚህ የህብረት ስራ ማህበራት በዲሞክራሲያዊ መንገድ በተመረጡ አመራሮቻቸው አማካኝነት በአግባቡ በህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት መዝጋቢ አካል ይመዘገባሉ።
- እነዚህ የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት ያለ ማረሚያ ቤቱ አስተዳደር ጣልቃ ገብነት ፣ ከውጪ አለም ጋር የቀጥታ የንግድ ትሥሥር ይፈጥራሉ። ተገልጋዮች ቁሳቁሶችን በቀጥታ ከህብረት ስራ ማህበራት ሊገዙ ይችላሉ። (የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራቱ ለማረሚያ ቤቱ ዋና ህንጻ አዋሳኝ በሆነ ዝግ ሥፍራ ላይ ይገኛሉ።) ወይም በታራሚዎች በሚነዱና የህብረት ስራ ማህበሩ በሆኑ መኪናዎች እቃዎቹን የተፈለጉበት ቦታ ድረስ ማድረስ ይቻላል።
- ከተለቀቁ በኋላም የቀድሞ ታራሚዎች የህብረት ስራ ማህበራቱ አባል ሆነውና ከህብረት ሥራ ማህበራቱ ጋር ሲሰሩ ሊቆዩ ይችላሉ። በርግጥም የተለቀቁ ታራሚዎች የራሳቸውን የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት የንግድ እንቅስቃሴ ያካሂዱ ዘንድ ከማረሚያ ቤት ቅጥር ውጭ ቦታ ይሰጣቸዋል። በድጋፍ ማጣትና የስራ ዕድል አለማግኘት ለማረሚያ ቤት ህይወት የመጋለጥ እድላቸው ሰፊ የሆነ የነጻና ላይ ህጻናት የትምህርት እና የክህሎት ስልጠና የሚያገኙበት ማዕከል ከመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት አጠገብ ተመስርቷል።

የክልሉ መንግሥት ያወጣው አዲሱ የህብረት ስራ ማህበራት ህግ ታራሚዎች የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት እንዲያቋቁሙ መፍቀዱ የክልሉ መንግሥት ማረሚያ ቤቶችን በሚመለከት የወሰደው እርምጃ አፋጥኖታል። ይህ ፖሊሲ ተሻሽሎ በመቀሌ የማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደር ተቋማዊ አደረጃጀት ሂደት ውስጥ እንዲካተት ተደርጓል።

የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት ተልዕኮውን ፣ ራዕዩንና ግቡን በግልጽ ተንትኖ አስቀምጧል። በስትራቴጂክ ፕላኑም የታራሚዎችን የእርምት ግዴታንና መብት በማስመልከት እሴቱን አንፀባርቋል።

የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት ስኬት የመንግስት ፖሊሲዎች የክልሉ ባለድርሻ አካላት ቅን ተሳትፎ ቅንጅት ድምር ውጤት ነው። አገሪቱ ሰብዓዊ መብቶችን ለሚመለከቱ አለም አቀፍ ሥምምነቶችንና ለህገመንግስቱ መከበር ቁርጠኝነት እያሳየች በመሆኑ መንግሥት የታራሚዎችን መብት ለማስጠበቅ በተለያዩ ጊዜያት የተለያዩ ህጎችን አውጥቷል። የክልሉ የማረሚያ ቤት ፖሊሲ ታራሚዎች የአቅም ግንባታ አገልግሎት፣ የምክር አገልግሎት ፣ የህግ ጉዳይ የማማከር ፣ የክህሎት ሥልጠና ፣ የንግድ ሃሳብ ማዳበር አገልግሎት ፣ መደበኛ ትምህርት አገልግሎት የማግኘት ሙሉ መብት አላቸው። ፣ በገቢ ማስገኛ ሥራዎች ላይ የመሰማራት ሙሉ መብታቸውም የተጠበቀ ነው።

የክልሉ የህብረት ሥራ ማህበር ህግ

በማረሚያ ቤት የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት የተቋቋሙት በ1998 የጸደቀውን የትግራይ ክልላዊ መንግሥት አዋጅ ቁጥር 145/2000 እና በትግራይ የማረሚያ ቤቶች አስተዳደር የተዘጋጀውን አዲስ መመሪያ መሠረት በማድረግ ነው። ይህ መመሪያ እንደሚለው በህግና በእርምት ሂደት ውስጥ ያለፉ ሁሉም ታራሚዎች መደራጀትና የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት ማቋቋም ይፈቅድላቸዋል። የክልላዊ መንግሥት ፖሊሲ ዋነኛ ዓላማ ታራሚዎች ሥልጠና አግኝተው በህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት መደራጀትና ዘላቂ ገቢ ማግኘት የሚጀምሩበትን እድል መፍጠር ነው። ታራሚዎች የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት ለማቋቋም የሚያስችላቸውን ዝግጅት እንዳጠናቀቁ የክልሉ የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት ቢሮና የጥቃቅንና አነስተኛ ኢንተርፕራይዝ(MSES) ቢሮ ታራሚዎች ከፋይናንስ አገልግሎት ሰጪ ድርጅቶች ጋር ከማግኘታቸው በፊት የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት አስተዳደርን ፣ የንግድ ሃሳብንና ሌሎች አስፈላጊ ርዕሰ ጉዳዮች በሚመለከቱ ሥልጠና የመስጠት ሃላፊነት አለባቸው።

የኢትዮጵያ የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት ህግ አመልካቾች የማህበራቸውን ሰነድ፣ የአባላትን የሥም ዝርዝር ፣ የተሾሙ የኮሚቴ አመራሮችንና የንግድ እቅድን የሚመለከቱ የተዘጋጁ ሰነድ ይጠይቃል። እነዚህ የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት የህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት ሲቋቋም የታለፈባቸው ሂደቶች ናቸው።



የማረሚያ ቤት ሃላፊዎች ሥልጠና

በትግራይ የማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደር አገልግሎት የክልሉ መነግስት የፀጥታ አስተዳደር ቢሮ ሃላፊነት ነው። በአንድ ሃላፊ የማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደር ሃላፊ ለመሆን የሙሉ ጊዜ የአስተዳደር ሥልጣንና መስፈርት ነው። በመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት ቢፒአር የተተገበረ ሲሆን የፌዴራል እና የክልል መንግሥት በጠየቁት መሠረት የታራሚዎችን ሃላፊነት፣ መብትና ጥቅማጥቅሞች እንዲሁም የማረሚያ ቤቱን አስተዳደር ሃላፊዎች ሃላፊነት በግልጽ የሚያስቀምጥ መመሪያ በማረሚያ ቤቱ ተዘጋጅቷል። የታራሚዎቹ መብቶች በመመሪያው ላይ ሲሰፍሩ ለታራሚዎች ህገመመንግስታዊ መብት ልዩ ትኩረት ተሰጥቶ ሁሉም አቀፍ ሰነዶችን ስምምነቶች ከግንዛቤ ውስጥ እንዲገቡ ተደርጓል።

ILO 2012 ላይ የክልሉ መንግስት 20 የማረሚያ ቤት ሃላፊዎች ቢሾፍቱ ከተማ በሚገኘው በኢትዮጵያ የሥራ አመራር ኢንስቲትዩት ለሁለት ሳምንት ሥልጠና እንዲወስዱ ድጋፍ አድርጓል። የሥልጠናው ርዕስ ጉዳዮች ሰብዓዊ መብት፣ ሥርዓተ ጾታ፣ ኮሙኒኬሽን ፣ ግጭት አፈታት፣ አመራር፣ የገንዘብ አጠቃቀም፣ የሰው ሀብት አያያዝ እና ሌሎች ተያያዥ ርዕስ ጉዳዮች ያካተቱ ነበሩ። ሠልጣኞች እንዳሉት ከታራሚዎች ጋር ያላቸው ግንኙነት ጥሩና ውጤታማ ለማድረግ ሥልጠናው ወቅታዊና አስፈላጊ ነበር።

የማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደር ጥናት ጉብኝት በደቡብ አፍሪካ የማኔጅመንት አስተዳደር ጥናት ጉብኝት የመቀሌው ፕሮጀክት የማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደር ስልጠና አካል ነው። የጥናት ጉብኝት የክልሉ ማረሚያ ቤቶች አስተዳደር በሆኑት በአቶ ፈረደ የሺአረጋህ የተዘጋጀ ነው። ለዘጠኝ ቀናት የቆየው የልምድ መጋራት ጉብኝት

የተወሰኑ ማረሚያና ሥልጠና ማዕከሎችን ከደቡብ አፍሪካ የማረሚያ ቤቶች ሃላፊዎች ጋር የተደረገ ውይይቶችን ያካተት ነበር። የጥናት ጉብኝቱ የተለየው ሌሎች የሥልጠና ማዕከላትን መመልከትንም ይጨምር ነበር። በቀጣይ የተዘረዘሩት ከጥናት ጉብኝቱ የተገኙ መልካም ተሞክሮዎች ናቸው።

- ለማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደር የሚመደበው በጀት በቂ ነው፤
- በመላ አገሪቱ የማረሚያ ቤቶች ይዞታ (ደረጃ) ወጥና አንድ ዓይነት ነው። የማረሚያ ቤቶች የተለያዩ ማዕከላት ከፍተኛ የጥራት ደረጃ ያላቸው ሲሆን ይህም በመላ አገሪቱ በሚገኙ ማረሚያ ቤቶች የሚታይ ወጥ ነገር ነው።
- ለታራሚዎች ሥልጠና ትልቅ ትኩረት ይሠጣል።
- በከብት ማርባት፣ የእንጨትና ብረታ ብረት ሥራ በከፍተኛ ሁኔታ ጥራቱን ተጠብቆ መሠራቱ በኢትዮጵያ የማረሚያ ማዕከላትን በማሻሻል አንድ አይነተኛ ምሳሌ ተወስዷል።
- አስተዳደር ቢዝነስ ሞዴሎች የተለዩ ናቸው። በደቡብ አፍሪካ ታራሚዎች ካመረቷቸው ዕቃዎች ሽያጭ የሚገኝ ሁሉም ገቢ የሚተዳደረው በማረሚያ ቤቱ አስተዳደር ነው። ታራሚዎች በማረሚያ ቤት ቆይታቸው ምንም ዓይነት ገንዘብ እንዲይዙ አይፈቀድላቸውም ። በሌላ በኩል በኢትዮጵያ ታራሚዎች በማረሚያ ቤት ቆይታቸው ገንዘብ የመያዝ፣ በማረሚያ ቤቱ ቅጥር በሚገኘው የብድርና ቁጠላ ተቋም የማስቀመጥ፣ ለቤተሰብ የመላክ፣ ዕቃ ወይም አገልግሎት ለመግዛት አልያም ለትምህርትና ለሌላም ገንዘባቸውን የማዋል መብት አላቸው።

የባለድርሻ አካላት መደምደሚያና አሰተያየት

ግዛቱን፣ ወንጀልና ድህነት ለማህበረሰብ ውስጥ ትልቅ ችግር በሚጋረጥበት ሁኔታ መቀሌ ማረሚያ ማዕከል ከተሞክሮው ያገኘው ትምህርት በጣም ጠቃሚ ነው። ታራሚዎችን መልሶ ማቋቋም ሰፊውን የወጣቶች ሥራ አጥነት ችግር በመቅረፍ በተለይም የወጣት ሴቶችን የስራ አጥነት ችግር በመፍታት ረገድ ድርሻ አለው። ማህበራዊ፣ ኢኮኖሚያዊና የክህሎት ማዳበር ይዘት ያለባቸው ሥልጠናዎች በማረሚያ ቤቱ አስተዳደር መሠጠቱ ያለውን የጾታ አለመመጣጠን ለመቋቋም ያስችላል። በማረሚያ ቤቱ እየተዘረጉ ያሉ በርካታ በርካታ ፕሮግራሞች አሉ። በታራሚዎች ትልቅ የክህሎትና የአቅም ግንባታ ፕሮግራም አለ።

በከተማው ጥፋት የመፈጸም አቅም አላቸው ተብሎ ለሚታመኑ የክህሎቱ ሥልጠና መስጠት የሚያስችል ፕሮግራምም በዝግጅት ላይ ነው። ወንጀል ለመፈጸም አቅም እንዳላቸው ለሚታመን የጎዳና ላይ ህጻናት የአጭር ጊዜ ሥልጠና ለመስጠት ይቻል ዘንድ አዲስ አዳሪ ትምህርት ቤትም በግንባታ ላይ ነው። ይህ ከቤተሰብ ወይም ከዘመድ ግንኙነት በማቋረጥ ህይወታቸውን የተሻለ ለማድረግ ጠባብ እድል ያላቸውን ጎዳና ላይ የሚያሳድሩ ህጻናትን ያጠቃልላል። የማረሚያ ቤቱ ሽግግር አሁን ካለው የኢትድራ የሰው ሃይል ጋር በቀላሉ የሚቀላቀል የሰለጠነ የሰው ሃይል እየፈጠረ ነው።

ታራሚዎች በገቢ ማስገኛ ክህሎቶችና በንግድ ሃሳብ ማጎልበት እያሰለጠኑ ነው። ታራሚዎች ከመቼውም የበለጠ ዛሬ ላይ ከንግድ ሃሳብ ፈጠራ ጋር ተዋውቀዋል። በርካታ ታራሚዎች በህብረት ሥራ ማህበራት ውስጥ በምርታማነት መስራትና አቅምን አጎልብቶ በገበያ ተወዳዳሪ የመሆን ጥቅምን ተረድተውታል። ታራሚዎች ምሉዕ የሆነ የባህሪ ለውጥ ያመጡ ዘንድ የባለድርሻ አካላት አዲስ አይነት አጋርነትም ተመስርቷል። የዚህ ዓይነቱ የባህሪ ለውጥ ታራሚዎች ከተለቀቁ በኋላም በሚቀላቀሉበት ማህበረሰብ ውስጥ ወንጀል እንዲቀንስ ጠቀሜታ ይኖረዋል። የመጨረሻ ድምር ውጤቱም ከፍተኛ የማህበረሰብ መረጋጋትና ሰላም ነው። የመቀሌ ማረሚያ ቤት አስተዳደር እንዳስታወቀው በአንድ አመት ውስጥ ከተለቀቁ 1416 ታራሚዎች ዳግም ወደ ማረሚያ ቤት የተመለሱት 16 ብቻ ናቸው። በእነዚህ ውስጥ ዳግም ሰባቱ ብቻ የብረት ሥራ ማህበራት አባል ናቸው። ይህ የታራሚዎች የሙያ ስልጠና ማግኘት በከፍተኛ ሁኔታ ዳግም ወንጀል የመፈጸም አቅምን እንደሚቀንስ ማሳያ ይሆናል። በተደጋጋሚ እንደተስተዋለው ታራሚዎች የማምረት አቅማቸውን አሳብረው የራሳቸውን ገቢ በመፍጠር ራሳቸውንና ቤተሰባቸውን መደገፍ ከጀመሩ ዳግም ወንጀል የመፈጸምና ወደ ማረሚያ ቤት የመመለስ እድላቸው በከፍተኛ ሁኔታ ይቀንሳል።



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