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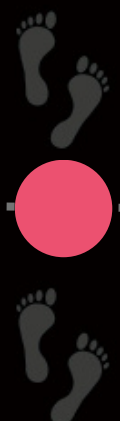
Better
Regional
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A returnee raised her income and improved her skills



"After the first day of the ILO training, I decided to work in my own country."





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Nebiyat Mekonen studied Building Electrical Installation at Entoto TVET and worked in the industry for a number of years. However, the job was challenging since she worked in condominiums far from her house and mostly in slam areas. As a result, she decided to change her career and started working as a salesperson in a clothing store. However, after working in several shops, she got frustrated with her low wages, which weren't enough to live a decent life.

Nebiyat decided to migrate, and with the help of a private employment agency in Ethiopia, she was able to secure employment as a salesperson in Dubai. Nebiyat stated that the job was pleasant; she worked 5 to 6 hours each day and was paid well. Unfortunately, the shop went bankrupt, and she lost her job. At the time, given that her visa had not expired, she explored alternative employment and was hired as a domestic worker. However, her experience as a domestic worker wasn't as pleasant as her prior sales experience.

"I wasn't eating properly or sleeping regularly," Nebiyat wept as she recounted her life as a domestic worker in Dubai. "There were days when the workload was too much that I couldn't sleep." After working for only two weeks, Nebiyat couldn't endure the hardship and returned to Ethiopia.

Migrant workers who lack proper information usually end up extending their stay, despite their visas having expired, putting them in danger of being classified as irregular/undocumented migrants. Migrants are even more vulnerable in such situations and face numerous challenges, including labour rights violations, abuses, and exploitation.

Fortunately, Nebiat was able to return before her visa expired. Once she returned to her country, she found work as a salesperson in a garment factory, but her wages were insufficient to sustain herself and her family.

"Luckily, while working in the factory, I heard of the FCDO-funded ILO Better Regional Migration (BRMM) programme that supports returnees," she explained.

"Being a domestic worker in another country was never my choice, but I was unaware of the opportunities available in Ethiopia. The support from the ILO has helped me discover many possibilities."





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After obtaining entrepreneurship, life skills and financial education training, as well as vocational skills training in fast food preparation, Nebiyat is now a successful beneficiary who has established her own business. She remarked that the training helped her from the beginning by improving her confidence, analysing her potential, and developing her business idea.



Her current business is a small-scale cereal and spice selling shop, also known as "Baltina". Due to the competitive nature of the business in Addis Ababa, Nebiyat started exporting her products to Dubai with the support of her sister.

"I export my products to Dubai with the help of my sister. I also prepare each package carefully with my mother."

Nebiyat intends to expand her clientele and increase her revenue. Currently, she has to ask people who travel to Dubai to deliver her products to her sister. She is, nevertheless, exploring methods and processes to formalise the distribution.

Through the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office-funded Better Regional Migration Management programme, the ILO provides an integrated package of services for potential and returned migrants to enable them to establish a sustainable livelihood in collaboration with various implementing partners.

The ILO, in partnership with Women in Self-Employment (WISE), supported 1,100 potential and returned migrants to establish livelihood opportunities through self and wage employment. The support included assisting potential and returning migrants to assess their potential and available resources, including proper investment of their savings. 1,002 beneficiaries received entrepreneurship, life skill, and financial education training based on the ILO Start and Improve Your Business and Financial education for potential and returned migrants tools; 46 trainees received psychosocial support due to their specific and special needs; 100 potential and returned migrants received employability skills training; 49 returnees received vocational skills; and 243 returnees participated in the "Yetchalal" returnees Savings and Credit Cooperative (SACCO).

