



International
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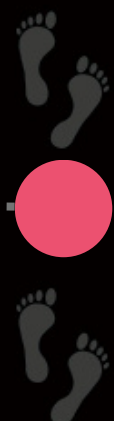
Better
Regional
Migration
Management



COVID-19 impacted returnees' reintegration into the Ethiopian labour market



"The ILO training was an eye-opener. I was able to comprehend the basic needs of a successful start-up".





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"There were times when we slept on an empty stomach. Some employers refused to give us food. We were beaten up, verbally harassed, and even spat at", Solomon Gobeze recalled his migration experience in Kuwait. Solomon is one of the many irregular migrants who were forcibly repatriated to Ethiopia from Kuwait during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic instantly shifted from a worldwide health pandemic to a global socioeconomic crisis. Migrant workers are generally the most impacted in such situations due to unstable and short-term contracts, lack of social protection, and their vulnerable status in the industries in which they work, typically low-paid and informal. With growing lockdowns and company closures in most migrant hosting countries, migrant workers were the first to be laid off ¹. According to ITUC-Africa, about half of the migrant population has lost their work in host countries as a result of lockdown measures ².

Solomon, for instance, who worked in Kuwait for ten years, returned to Ethiopia empty-handed. He indicated that his profits usually went towards debt repayment, general expenditure, and remittances to his family. Thus, his abrupt, unplanned, and unexpected return home has devastated his entire family, as the money he used to send has ceased. Moreover, he became an additional burden on the household's limited resources.

Solomon is now one of the many UK FCDO-funded ILO Better Regional Migration Management (BRMM) programme beneficiaries that have received support. With the support of the ILO Start and Improve your Business and Financial Education for potential and returning Migrants, he

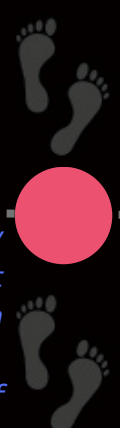


learned entrepreneurial and financial skills. Following the training, he was able to analyse the market need in his vicinity and discovered that there was a demand for selling candles.

With the financial support he received, he purchased a wax melter that makes around 36 candles, and he is now selling "Ethio Shama" candles from his house.

1ILO 2020. ILO Monitor 1st Edition. COVID-19 and the world of Work: Impact and Policy responses. 18 March 2019. "Migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, which will constrain their ability to access their places of work in destination countries and return to their families."

2ITUC-Africa 2020. African Responses to the COVID-19 Health Crisis and the Role of Trade Unions (VOL2). Newsletter Special Edition. N° 018/06/2020





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"There are various candle designs I can manufacture, and I am currently teaching myself through YouTube tutorials".

The BRMM programmes supported more than 3,000 beneficiaries (potential and returned migrants) to acquire skills in entrepreneurship and financial education. From these trained beneficiaries, 1,500 returnees in a vulnerable situation have received cash transfers of USD 150. This cash assisted them in their daily consumption until they can engage in income-generating activities. It also covered their daily allowance and transportation costs to attend training provided by the programme.

