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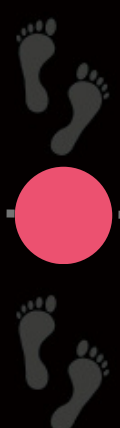
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Resilience in Action: A Mother of Three Thrives with ILO's Assistance



"I am so grateful to the ILO and Live Addis's support, which immensely helped me establish my own business. I never imagined I would have the chance for such an opportunity in my country."





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Tigist Tesfaye, who resides in Kirkos sub-city, Addis Ababa, experienced an unplanned pregnancy at the age of fourteen. This unprecedented event changed her life abruptly from a young teenage student to a mother responsible for herself and her child.



"The unplanned pregnancy, which felt like a horrible nightmare, created a challenging time for myself and my family," said Tigist.

"Following the birth of my child, I had no options but to quit school when I was in Seventh grade and started working in order to provide for my family. I decided to go to Beirut, Lebanon and started working there as a domestic worker for two years. Sadly, my employer in Beirut was very abusive, forcing me to undertake tasks for her mother, sisters, and other relatives without any additional compensation."

Tigist migrated to Beirut without having all the relevant documentation and she did not have the relevant skills or much of formal education. In addition, she didn't possess a work visa or permit, and she was unaware of her rights or how to protect herself from abuse or exploitation. Due to the excessive workload at her employer's house, she tried to leave her employer, but her attempt was unsuccessful. She was arrested, imprisoned, and eventually deported back to Ethiopia, a heart-breaking experience for her.

When returning back is abrupt, unexpected, and unplanned, many migrants return to their home countries with little to nothing, as their earnings are normally utilised to pay off debts, meet daily expenditures, and send remittances to their families. Tigist's return was no exception, she returned with only one pair of flip-flops. The small amount of money she had sent to her grandma was used to support her child's expenses. As a result, she made a decision to re-migrate.

"When I re-migrated to Dubai, I had to pay ETB 14,000 to the agency which facilitated my journey. But it was okay as I found a decent job promptly." Tigist commenced her employment as a domestic worker in Dubai. However, the family she worked for had to relocate to the United States. Thankfully, they paid her six months' salary in advance and arranged her return back to Ethiopia. After a few months of her return, she realised that she still couldn't support her family for long. This led her to plan for her third migration.





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Once again, she paid ETB 14,000 to the agency that facilitated her journey to Dubai. This time, she endured physical and psychological abuse in addition to a prolonged term of unemployment while staying in the Ethiopian Employment and Labour Agency Office. After a lengthy wait, she eventually secured employment with a family of six. Her employer (the woman of the house), however, abused and exploited her while falsely accusing her of having an affair with her husband.

"She forced me to clean walls and floors with bleach, and my hands were bleeding while I worked. My situation was unbearable, so I left/escaped the household"

"After I escaped, I worked for a few months as a runaway before deciding to return to Ethiopia." During her back and forth in Ethiopia, Tigist had not found decent work even though she was actively looking for employment. But during her most recent return, she made a decision to remain and look for opportunities in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The ILO, through the UK FCDO-funded BRMM programme, provides an integrated package of services for potential and returned migrants to enable them establish a sustainable livelihood. In collaboration with LIVE ADDIS, the BRMM supported potential and returned migrants in assessing their skills and potential, enhance their skills, facilitate their involvement in income-generating activities, and improve their understanding of the risks associated with irregular migration. Through this initiative, 150 potential and returning migrants received training in entrepreneurship, life skills, and financial education, utilising tools such as the ILO's 'Start and Improve Your Business' and 'Financial Education for Potential and Returning Migrants.' Following the completion of these training sessions, the beneficiaries generated reliable business ideas and received in-kind support amounting to ETB 10,000 to assist them in establishing income-generating activity. Currently, 131 of these beneficiaries have successfully established sustainable businesses that provide support for themselves and their families.





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Tigist, a returning migrant and a mother of three, is one of the program's beneficiaries. She acquired training in entrepreneurship, life skills, and financial education. After completing the training, Tigist started a small business selling Injera, a traditional Ethiopian food. With the support of ILO and Live Addis, she purchased an injera and bread-making machine, as well as essential cooking materials.

Tigist expressed her gratitude, saying, "Thanks to the support of ILO and Live Addis, I now manage my own business."

Through her new business, she now earns approximately ETB 70 per day, with higher earnings during holidays when she sells both Injera and traditional Ethiopian bread. She has solid plans and aspirations to expand her business and increase her income. Tigist envisions improving her revenue by selling her products in a more convenient rented location or government-owned buildings. Her ultimate goal is to integrate her injera and bread bakery into a small food court and coffee shop.

