



Building the Potential of Youth in Ethiopia



the youth. In Ethiopia, USAID is helping the Ministry of Youth convert 28 of the nearly 2,000 youth centers established by the government into employment and entrepreneurship centers. Each day more than 170 youth access transferable life skills and entrepreneurship training, group and individual coaching, career guidance, job placement and market data for the first time—and many return regularly to access these services.

An opportunity using self-capacity

Abebe Birhanu- Amhara Regional State

Location: Dehub Achefer Woreda, West Gojjam Zone

Youth: Employed

Themes: Livelihood

Abebe Birhanu, 22, is from Abchkli kebele, Dehub Achefer Woreda of Amhara Region. He completed grade 10 and suffering a lot to change his life. He was growing by keeping rich farmers cattle around his village since his families are poor. This situation affects his success in education to have a good result and to be employed as a civil servant. Undefined work option and his family economic status always come to his mind and make him restless.

Fortunately members of the selection committee at kebele level targeted him for POTENTIAL program. He takes Positive Youth Development and Work Ready Now trainings. After passing through the trainings, he gets an opportunity to look into himself and available employment opportunities /resources in his kebele/surrounding. He also gets an opportunity to take technical/hard skill training on mobile maintenance at Durebete TVET Collage based on his Personal Development Plan.

After completing the training, he took 14,000 Birr loan from his friend Melkamu, opened a mobile maintenance shop thinking of a trial of feasibility of this business in the area. Later he added a 20,000 Birr loan from ACSI. He expands the business and changed the address of the shop around the main road of the town. He re payed all the loan and began to work on small nursery site to get additional income.



Figure 1, Abebe, at the Shop

Abebe says the program saved him from exposing his labour with no payment at all. He also tries to guess his future in that way and think of his ages ending without using his internal capacity. “If I was not got this opportunity, when will be I become a mobile technician? Hope I was continuing as a farmer of others. But now I can live a safe life, help my families and also set a goal.”

Building the Potential of Youth is a USAID funded Activity implemented by Professional Alliance for Development (PADet) in collaboration with Save the Children to capacitate 7200 youths through training in their pathway for employment in six Regions of Amhara.

“Now I can talk”

Aschalew Asmamaw is 26 years old living in Argabo kebele of Jawi woreda, Amhara Regional State. He



completed grade 10 in 2015 with a result that do not allow him to join preparatory school as he wish. After this incident he planned to attend Technical skill training at TVET College. He could not achieve his plan because of his families’ willingness to cover his expense during his study because of their low economic status.

As a result he feels discomfort, stressed, loses self-confidence and becomes carless & irritated. He frequently takes alcohol, fighting with his families and friends. To reform his deviant behavior, his uncle facilitates a support to him and provides 5000 Birr and he began to work by opening a small shop.

But he couldn’t carry on the activity effectively due to poor cash management skill/business skill and this lead him to have a misconception towards shop business and he generalize and Sayed that “it was not totally profitable.” He left the shop and opens a juice house and closed it after two month because of lack of input resources, especially fresh fruits and losing his customers due to poor handling. Then decided to stop this business again due to deficit and he becomes a carpenter. He was still unhappy by his work since it was seasonal by nature and there is a skill gap on his side so, he was not preferred by the community. The up and down he made for a living leads him to seek to go back to his pervious life of living.

When he was in this situation, the kebele YESC select him to be part of POTENTIAL program which is being implemented by PADet and SCI. He passed through Positive Youth Development, Work Ready

Now & Be Your Own Boss training. Taking those trainings help him to Develop & prepare a Personal Development Plan /PDP on cattle trading activities which will be implemented by his capacity.

After completing the training he starts cattle trading activity using 4000 Birr from family support as a startup capital. He buys cattle with relatively least cost from remote areas and sells them to the nearby towns with profitable price. He earns an attractive profit from time to time. He has a plan to expand his business to fattening and opening a Boucher. By maximizing his earning, he also wants to construct a living house at Fendika town and married a wife.

“Everything was changed through POTENTIAL support”

Mulunesh, 24, is from Liben kebele Semen Achefer woreda, Amhara regional state. Her dream was completing higher education and employed in government sector; but her dream does not go beyond grade 10. She doesn't get passing score for Ethiopian National Exam. After that Mulunesh's parents doesn't have any asset to send their daughter to college. She became hopeless and spent and kills her day by sleeping. Before joining POTENTIAL activity she migrates to Addis Ababa for searching job and to earn income to cover a minimum daily expense; but the things in Addis was not comfortable for Mulunesh as she expected. After 2 years stay at Addis she returned back to her place of origin Liben.

Mulunesh's birth place is one of intervention kebele of USAID's Building the POTENTIAL of Youth Activity. Kebele YESC understand Mulunesh's situation and believe that her life could be changed through POTENTIAL activity. Due to this kebele YESC select Mulunesh to take POTENTIAL soft skill training packages for 18 days. During the training she participates actively and set her future goal. After passing through transferable life skill trainings she overlooks different employment opportunities. As indicated in her Personal Development Plan (PDP) she needs to open *Baltina* shop.

To achieve her PDP Mulunesh request working shade from woreda Technic Vocational Enterprise Development Office (TVEDO). She also prepares and submit business plan. POTENTIAL staffs discuss with TVEDO focal to facilitate working shade for Mulunesh, since she attain work readiness skills and her attitude towards work is changed. After discussion held TVEDO permits shade for her with minimum rent and she opened shop. In her shop she earns 45 birr per day and save 500 birr per month. She saved 5700 birr from her business.



Figure 2, Mulunesh's Shop

Mulunesh said “the activity helped me to dream big and to win my daily bread”. She noted that looking other places regardless of assessing nearby resources is bad. “Know things changed and I feel confident because my dream becomes a reality

through the support of Potential work readiness trainings” as she said. In future she planned to open restaurant and scale up her business.

Steps to better Pathway

Habtamu Andualem, 24 is from Gissa 01 kebele of Dangila woreda Amhara region. He is the 7th & the last child for the family. He completed grade 10 even if his plan was joined University. Because of high family members in the house he can't engaged in a job in self-employment as per his plan. He afraid to request a startup since his families are poor and cover the expense of many children's including him.

He becomes restless. He decided to live alone by separating from his family. He began a small job thinking it is better and good too if the earning covers a minimum of the house rent and daily expense. But he could not effectively run the work he gained even for a month. He starts working, but immediately he give up. He says he simply fails and he loses hope. He can't overcome challenges.

As a matter of chance Gissa 01 kebele CCC committee identified him as a target believing he will find his path way if he get work ready now training. This opens a chance to find himself as he says. “Something clicked my mind and the training sent the right message which makes me to wake up. I really get necessary and crucial knowledge to engage in business and to make my life better. The training and all the chance I get to take it is a golden bell for me”

Based on his Personal Development Plan (PDP), Youth facilitator link him with Volunteer mentors found in his village who are the owner of a Photography shop. Later Habtamu start his career journey in this private photo shop earning birr 800 per month. This paves a way to grasp knowledge over the salary he earns. By the support of his mentor and his strong commitment habtamu become professional camera man. He said *“Thanks to work ready now and my mentor now I realized that I can be entrepreneur”*.

Using the opportunity that the government arranges, he plans to take revolving fund and open his own photography shop. Even if youths in his surrounding have a negative thought regarding loan he saved 18000 ETB and access 162000 ETB Loan from ACSI with a strong support from POTENTIAL Dangila team. The team also linked him with TVEDO and he gets a working container. Now Habtamu is working on his own computer and photo shop business. He says *“Now life is changed. I am starting to repay 3500.00 birr per month for the revolving fund I borrowed. I have also a weekly saving in ekub, Birr 400.00. So that hopefully I can have my own house and I am ready to build it as soon as the government gives me the land.”* He was also in search of an institution, who gives technical training for him on computer and Mobile maintenance, because he has a plan to open a Maintenance shop.



Figure 3, Habtamu's Photo Shop

Work Ready Now training is my Vehicle

Yeshambel Mandefro was a 21 years old youth who lived in Wogelsa kebele, Bahir Dar Zuria Woreda. He was one of USAIDs building the potential of youth's program beneficiary who successfully completed Work Ready Now training.

He also gets a chance to take additional potential training packages called Positive Youth Development. He was an active participant during the training sessions. He was engaged in small business before joining potential program and lives with his families.

After taking Work Ready Now training, he developed his own Personal Development Plan /PDP/ and he wants to be engaged in sheep fattening. Because he was motivated positively by the training he takes; he immediately starts his business by buying some sheep and use his family house as a place where his sheep becomes grow and nursery site.

As He said the training is very useful and crucial and it initiated him to start his own business by develop his self-confidence. To effectively know the way how to fatten sheep properly he request Agriculture development officers found around his area and he receive orientation and continues technical support.



Figure 4. Yeshabel with his sheep

Now he becomes well skilled person and can perform every activity in relation to his work without any support from others.

He said that “*Work ready now training is the special training packages that I was never taken before and it help me to find myself and to easily communicate with others.*”

From the training, I also get the skill and knowledge about customer handling and to work strongly with hope for long time to achieve my goals. Currently I have a vision and I hope I will achieve it in the near future. In doing this I need additional support to get loan access and market linkage to diversify my business.

Yeshabel also says that, he was working hardily in order to expand this small business. This was his future plan as he says. He was hopeful to grow by the business he involved now.

Don't give up, be sure that there is light at the end of the tunnel !

Melkamu a 25 years aged youth lives in Durebete, a small twon in South Achefer Woreda, one of Amahara region potential intervention woredas. After taking grade ten final examination, he feels hopeless because he scores insufficient and unexpected result. Unfortunately he lost his father at the same year and he obliged to live with his mother.

When he lead his life in this way, the kare guraje kebele CCC members identify and select him as a potential beneficiery. He take WRN training. While attending Work Read Now training Melkamu realized that it was to early to give up. Then he assess the needs of the community and looking for practical bussiness ideas which will be profitable in his community.

He figur out and decided to be involved in Eleconic maintence /Mobile maintence to provide cost effective service for his community members and to earn money as the same time by this bussiness which doesn't have too much compitants on the market.

In addition WRN and PYD trainings he takes from potential, he also attend electronic maintenance practical/hard skill training at Durbete Technical and Vocational skill training collage. After accomplishing the training successfully, Melakamu wants to start maintenance business while his motivation and memories of the skills acquired through the training are still fresh.

On the other hand, the money he has at hand was too much less than what he would need to start the business. By assessing another opportunity with in his surrounding, he tries to achieve his objectives rather than losing hopes. He finds another guy who takes computer maintenance with him and cooperatively they try to fulfill some equipments and they began to work in group to share their capital they have because they have common interest to open electronic maintenance shop.



Melakamu in his electronic center

When they become profitable and see success by the business they already involved, Melakamu decided to separate from his friend and open his own electronic maintenance shop in the main road of Bahir Dar to Addis Ababa.

He said that "Nowdays I was afraid why I thought that I was both worthless and hopeless before. Thanks to the soft skill trainings and technical support of the USAID's Building the potential of youth program. Now I have renewed energy and hope for the future. Since I am working on the main road it was visible and I am busy by work. After a couple of years I envision having my own big shop with at least four employees."

I. "MY TWO EYES OPENED"

Bewket Abech, is 21 years old unemployed target lived in Semen Achefer woreda at liben kebele. He completed grade 10 in 2006 E.C and was unemployed until POTENTIAL program intervene in the Woreda. Bewket was selected as one of the project target by kebele CCC committee. Then he took WRN training for 13 days by POTENTIAL Youth Facilitator. He attained the training without interruption and actively participates during the training and shares his life experiences with other trainees.

After completion of the training he prepares his future Personal Development Plan (PDP). As indicated in his PDP he needs to engage in seedling production but, he has not money at hand to buy plastic, seed and working place. To help him, to succeed his dream POTENTIAL staffs linked him with farm and natural resource office to facilitate agricultural inputs by signing MoU and the office provides 55 kg plastic and mango seed.

He got premise from his parents and they provide working land for seedling production. He planted 10,000 mango trees for 3 months. After 3 months the mango tree becomes mature for planting. After three months POTENTIAL staffs linked him with the local market to gain better income. As a result Semen Achefer Woreda Farm and natural resource office bought 4500 mango trees with 4 birr price and totally he sold 18,000 birr.

He remarked that, he training he attained at POTENTIAL Program helped him to open his two eyes and he believed that work is the only means to win life. He added that, before he took the training he plans to migrate to other urban areas and wanted to be daily laborer but, the training changed his attitude. Now he has a dream and expressed his feeling as “for the future I plan to buy a car and I want to be a driver” and “POTENTIAL enables me to open my two eyes”.



Figure: Bewuketu Nursery Site

“I am hopeful”

Muche Minyichil is a 23 year's old youth living in Bahirdar Zuria Woreda at Yinesa Kebele. He has completed grade three and living alone. Before joining POTENTIAL program, He was spending time without any kind of productive activities and life was difficult for him. In the third implementation year of POTENTIAL Program, Muche joined the program and able to attained Positive Youth Development (PYD) training. He attained the training completely and able to change his future life. He explained the condition as: *"I have learned so many things from the training and the training helps me to create my own job and because of that I am able to improve my livelihood"*. After the training he developed his behavior on customer handling and financial management skills. His attitude on, self-confidence and work commitment has also strongly improved. He has also developed a good saving plan, which will guide him in achieving future plan. After taking the training he started men's beauty salon and motivated him to have other future hope. He expressed his future life as: *"I am hopeful! My future plan is to add additional business like photo copy machine"*.



Figure 7, Muches Men's Beauty Salon

I Found My self

Wasihun Senay is a young man whose age is found early twenties living in Hamusit kebele of Dera woreda. He was one of the target beneficiary youths involved in USAID'S Building the Potential of Youth Activity Project because he was unemployed before. Latter after selection, He successfully took and accomplished Youth in Action, Work Ready Now and be your Own Boss trainings.

Based on his Personal Development plan he was prepared after completing WRN! Training, he rank poultry farm as his first business area that he want to be engaged and work in the future. By linking him with trained volunteer mentors at his kebeles, he receive mentor services regarding to Poultry farm focusing on what do he do in working with hens and how far he were ready enough and committed to involve in poultry farming.

In order to get seed money to be involve in self-employment, He first employed and works at Amhara Water Works Enterprise as daily laborer and saves 2000 birr. Side by side in times of working at the aforementioned organization, he bought sheep's to fatten them and to get a little amount of profit for his future plan. Finally he sold the sheep and got 1000 ETB net profit and began to work on Poultry farm by buying 20 egg hens.

Wasihun said that, *"People around me always say, 20 hens are very small and can't consider as a business. Because I know what will be in the future, I don't hear them and I simply invest my effort to achieve my plan. I know everything will be possible if someone believe and strongly need it."*



Figure, Wasihun on feeding hens

As he said, he learns many things regarding to working with hens; how to feed them in order to feed by them latter and expand his business. He strongly works by devoting his time. He also appreciate and thank USAID'S Building the potential of youth Activity program for giving a chance to see himself and the opportunities around him to change his way of life.

He said, *"The training opens my eye to see myself, resources found around me, good opportunities I have and to find who I am really does."*

He interestingly continued his saying and said that, *"See the training and their components, they dig out your capacity and show the way of searching your strength and yourself. In Work Ready Now training I really found myself and motivated to start my own business with a small amount of money by developing better communication skills and effective customer handling skills as indirect startup capital for successful business. In addition to work ready now, Be your Own Boss training played a crucial role in my business operation. The training helps me to know how to budget my startup capital, how to calculate my net profit, how to record my income and expense and how to improve my saving habits. Simply the training helps I to know who I am and find myself on business."*

This is his beginning and he has a strong vision to change his way of life and living standard by working hard. He truly learned to work for long time to get money and to live safely with happiness. Now he has a clear and achievable vision and he was highly motivated. He has a plan to expand his business and want to buy more hens and to produce and sell eggs to many Hotels and Cafeterias around his area. By seeing his effort as witness, hopefully he will be one of the young business man and entrepreneur in the near future.

Now I can Smile

Samrawit Abeje, 19 years old unemployed target lived in North Achefer woreda Yismala kebele, noted the significance difference of her life before WRN training and after receiving POTENTIAL soft employability skill training. She completed grade 10 in 2007 E.C and idle until POTENTIAL project intervene in the Woreda. Samrawit is selected as one of the project target by kebele CCC committee. She took Positive Youth Development and WRN training for 18 days without interruption and actively participates during the training and shares her life experiences with other colleagues.



After completion of the training she filled her personal development plan. Through her PDP POTENTIAL staff assigned her in a local hair dressing institution to acquire basic skills and to know the real work environment. She also active in YESG meeting and generate business ideas which is locally available.

As a result Samrawit got basic skill and got premise from the trainer and employed as a hair dresser with 500 birr monthly salary. She remarked that “the training she attained helped her that to open her eye and believe that work is the only acceptable way to win life”. She added that “before she took the training she plans to migrate to other urban areas” but the training change her attitude. She told us that “for the future I plan to open Photo studio”.

I CAN BE CHANGE!

Molla Germew is a young man in his mid-twenties years old living in Anbesami kebele in Dera woreda. He is one of the target youth incorporated in USAID'S Building of Youth program who successfully completed Work Ready Now and Be Your Own Boss training.

Molla was one of the youth who actively participated in the training and he has starting its own business before training but it is not satisfied business and. He said that training is very useful and initiated him to start his own business and got priceless knowledge from it and highly interested with the contents found in the modules.

Molla has 2004 batch of graduated students and has wage employed in repairing bus tire maker (gomista) in Bahir dar town before entering into the program. Then he comes in Anbesami kebele and joins USAID's building the potential of youth selected by kebele TVEDO and kebele community care coalition committee program.

After successfully Work Ready Now training, he filled and well developed his Personal Development Plan /PDP/ and he wants to be engaged in metal and wood work activities. He created a linkage with Anbesami technique and vocational enterprise development office to get further support to be started on its own business based on its own personal developmen6t plan.

As the result, they gave a furniture machine to him and link again with ACSI offices to get loan access and lends from ACSI about 10,000 birrs then he starts wood working (furnisher) and metal works.

He said that work ready now training help me easily to communicate persons better to handle with his customers and to work for long time now my vision is high motivation and created partnership to start a business. In addition to work ready now training and be your own boss training is very interesting how to manage and saving my small amount of many to further plan to be reach easily.



Now he is working bed, buffee, table, dressing table, and other related products to the area market and a competitive business man. For the future, he plans to fulfill furniture materials and big furniture shop opens and to create works for the unemployed friends.

Carrier shift from daily labor to Bakery owner

Derbew Derso is a 24 years youth living in Durbete town grew in low income family. His means of livelihood was stone quarry for construction supply in Ahuri kebele. But the work required physical energy to dig out, break & transporting to the market. In addition, the market demand has seasonal fluctuation. Due to this reason he was not as such interested and he thought to buy a bread baking machine. Meanwhile he is one of USAID's building the potential of youth's program beneficiary in the quarter. The field team had looked him to have such type of tendency and arranged WRN, BYOB and work based learning training in Durbete town. WBL training was carried out in cooperation with Abrham Bakery PLC. With a few moment of interval, he achieved his dream of holding bakery machine and baking testy bread to the local community.

To make him productive in WBL training, the PADet staffs at the field helped the business man to get



electric power from office of electric authority. After frequent coaching and advises by PADet/SC staffs, this youngster became the owner of bakery machinery at Ahuri kebele.

Dreams comes to real

Hassan Gobena is a young man in his mid-twenties living in Hamusit kebele, Dera woreda. He is one of the target youths by USAID'S Building of Youth program who successfully completed Work ready now training since last year. Hassan was unemployed and economically dependent with his families. However, the kebele selection committee has found and nominated him to get access WRN training in Hamusit town.

When he was participated in Work Ready Now training, he prepared his Personal Development Plan /PDP/with a support of Youth Facilitator. His goal was to start own business on metal work and welding activities. In Hamusit, Amhara saving and credit institute (ACSI) can offer loan with 15% interest. But as he is Muslim taking loans with interest is forbidden. He tried to see other alternatives. Finally, he shared his plan to his friend. His friend believed on the plan and willing to borrows 16, 000 birr. And he saved 5000.00 birr. Totally he already gets a startup capital of 21,000.00 birr. He bought necessary equipment and materials for metal work. At the same time, he rented house used for this w/shop by 600 birr per month.



Before this time, Hassan hadn't an exposure for metal work, but he never give-up on his dreams. But, he recruited another better skilled person for short time and learnt from him gradually. Now he learned the skills and become a professional metal worker. He praises the training that let him to be ready for work and

realize his dream by planning his goals. He said that "work ready now training helped me to meet my personal goal, to communicate effectively with my customers and handle the properly, improve my working habit by working hard for long time. I have a plan to expand my work by taking loan without interest".

"Journey towards Fat stock"

Yekoye, Getahun and his friend's Animal fattening share unions (Cooperatives) is found in Jawi woreda Workmeda kebele administration having 5(I-F) members. All are within the age range of



15-29 and they are the third round potential program target trainees in Workmeda kebele.

Before their involvement in potential program and start taking soft skill trainings, they are imprisoned by serious attitudinal problems regarding to lack of adequate knowledge and commitment to engage in work. They haven't future plan, interest to start business with minimum capital found at hand or the available

resources.

Even most of them were marginalized by their community because they were unemployed & they were interested to be engage in wage employment only as their last and the only choice in their business lifespan. They don't know about the benefit of team work.

After the program participation, taking PYD and WRN trainings, they become active in forming groups and involving in IGA. They are well aware about the benefit of group work and cooperation, what is expected from group members for success, know the responsibility of group leader/representative & each member. Drawing their community map enables them to know their opportunities and challenges to start business activities in their community.

They cascade a deep and long discussion on and after the training period. Prepared their PDP (Personal Developmental Plan) properly identifying the available local resources/ possible work places in their surroundings. After a while they prepare a business plan on animal fattening.

Based on the business plan they prepare, they take 278,000.00 (Two Hundred Seventy Eight Thousand Birr) revolving fund as loan at ACSI (Amhara Credit and Saving Institution) to start their business. Then after, they start fattening having eight oxen purchased by the aforementioned source of finance.

Now they are happy and give all the time they have to their business for achieving their future plan. Their approach and way of business management was also interesting. One of the members, Yekoye Sayed that, *“Thanks to SCI-PADet Building the POTENTIAL of Youth program that arrange magical life changing trainings like WRN, which enable us to change our attitude and engaged in business. Now we are strongly feeding the oxen to feed us sustainably”*. The other member also says that, *“Youth facilitator and Woreda officer support in linking us with Woreda and kebele stakeholders, such as woreda TVEDO, ACSI, kebele TVDO and kebele administration (who arrange working place & the revolving loan for us and other supports in needed)”*.

Their short term future plan is to have Bajaj (Small Taxi) individually to work day and night effectively and efficiently to attain their goal. They manage their activities on time by plan; members are very committed for work and are self-confident too. They are accountable, respected each other, hopeful and visionary. This all things observed from the group members and the affordability of the business they engage has a plus advantage to be successful in the near future.