

New Niches and Novel Enterprises

BLURB...Gore, a town in southwestern Ethiopia, located in the Metu–Gore–Tepi montane moist forest ecosystem, in Ale district, Illubabor Zone, Oromia Region, is known for its honey. The town's prime location, high altitude of 2085 metres (6,841 feet), as well as diverse flora, makes it ideal for beekeeping, which has historically been practised using traditional methods. In 2020, the More Young Entrepreneurs in Silk and Honey (MOYESH) project started implementing activities in Ale district, including in Gore. A partnership between the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (www.icipe.org), and the [Mastercard Foundation's Young Africa Works](#), the five-year initiative aims to see 100,000 young men and women in Ethiopia secure dignified and fulfilling work along honey and silk value chains. Through the MOYESH project, modern beekeeping technologies have been introduced in Ale district. In addition to the direct benefits, for example improved production of bee products such as honey, the MOYESH project has opened up new opportunities for entrepreneurs in the beekeeping value chain. Below, we tell the stories of two enterprises in Gore town that have established niches in providing protective beekeeping clothing and in the production of modern hives for the emerging beekeeping enterprises in the district and beyond.

Protective beekeeping clothing enterprise

In 2016, Mr Gemechis Abera, then aged 28 years, established a micro enterprise known as Gemechis, Tigist and Friends, in Gore town, Ale district, Illubabor Zone, Oromia Region. He did so with an initial capital of ETB 40,000 (USD 1,600) from the Ale district job creation office. In the beginning, the enterprise focused on general tailoring, targeting a local female and male clientelle.

"I was fortunate to have started a business at such a young age. In the first five years of operation, we operated on a modest scale in terms of our capital base and market reach. We were only a staff of two people," says Mr Abera. "However, I always had the desire and vision of expanding the business."



Gemechis Abera, Manager, Gemechis, Tigist and Friends Enterprise, displays protective beekeeping clothing in his shop, ready to be supplied to MOYESH project partners.

In 2020, after the MOYESH project started its operation in Ale district, Gemechis, Tigist and Friends Enterprise was selected as a provider of protective beekeeping clothing. These kits bestow safety and peace of mind to beekeepers; the assurance that they are unlikely to get stung by the bees enables the beekeepers to work calmly and effectively. The protective beekeeping clothing includes a hat and a veil, which are built into a loose-fitting, light-coloured, long-sleeved jacket or suit that has a fastening and no gaps. Thus, the production of the kits requires very precise skills. Over the years, *icipe* has amassed extensive experience in building the capacity of suppliers to provide inputs, such as protective beekeeping clothing.

To equip Gemechis, Tigist and Friends Enterprise with the skills necessary to produce the kits, the *icipe* team partnered with previously trained protective beekeeping clothing suppliers. Moreover, the enterprise benefitted from *icipe*'s intense and well structured entrepreneurial skills development. This course is a combination of soft skills training, whose main pillars are based on the 30 behaviours of successful entrepreneurs and 10 major competencies that can be applied by anyone regardless of their educational status, gender and living conditions. It also consists of hard skills training including marketing, customer care, financial record keeping, and business plan preparation. The training was conducted by *icipe* in collaboration with a master trainer certified by the United Nations Conference on Trade Development (UNCTAD).

In just two years, Gemechis, Tigist and Friends Enterprise has proven itself in terms of capacity to supply protective beekeeping clothing, to the quality and quantity required, and in a timely manner. To date, the enterprise has delivered 1400 protective beekeeping clothing to MOYESH project partners, and other beekeepers, in Ale and Yayu districts of the Ilubabor zone, with a gross income of ETB 1,550,000 (about USD 40,789). In accordance to the rising demand for the products, the enterprise has enhanced its business, with additional equipment, and more employees with more competitive remuneration.

“The MOYESH project has had a transformative impact on our business and our lives. We are also creating jobs for people in the area,” states Mr Abera.

In appreciation of its growth and potential, the local administration has allocated land to Gemechis, Tigist and Friends Enterprise, to expand its business. The enterprise has received an investment license and bank loans totalling ETB 500,000 (USD 14,700). These resources are enabling the enterprise to construct a business centre in Gore town, which will open up business opportunities for the local community.



MOYESH project technical assistants from Oromia Region, Ethiopia, all kitted out in beekeeping protective clothing tailored by Gemechis, Tigist and Friends Enterprise, during a training session organised by *icipe* and partners in Ale district.

Modern hives producer

In introducing modern beekeeping, *icipe* helps beekeepers in Ethiopia to change from the traditional, rustic cone shaped, skep beehives, to modern hives. Among the modern hives that *icipe* introduces are Langstroth, known globally as the highest honey yielding hive. The hive is built with frames separated from each other. The advantage of the hive is that the bees build their honeycomb into the frames – wooden rectangles designed to hold a honeycomb, which are slotted downward into grooves from the top of the hive and can be easily lifted out. The frames are so arranged that they can be removed individually without disturbing other honeycombs and without crushing bees. The frames are set at a fixed distance from each other, which is calculated to prevent bees from attaching honeycombs where they would connect adjacent frames or connect the frames to the walls of the hive. The Centre also introduces a range of so-called transitional hives, which are simple modifications that can be made using locally available materials. They include the Chefeka hive, which is constructed with sticks and the Kenya Topbar hive which is manufactured using plane wood.

Making modern beehives requires a certain level of skills that beekeepers do not always have, thus creating opportunities for entrepreneurs. A rigorous process is used to identify modern beehive suppliers. Potential enterprises are selected by their respective district job creation offices, based on their previous experience in woodwork, capital base and interest to partner with the MOYESH project. The enterprises are then are

invited to submit bids to *icipe*. In 2020, 14 woodwork micro-enterprises were selected to provide modern beehives in eight districts in Oromia region. They included Tseganesh and Zelalem Woodwork Micro-enterprise from Ale district, which was established in 2017 with an initial capital ETB 600,000 (USD 24,000) and six personnel.

The micro-enterprises received technical training provided by the *icipe* team in partnership with Jimma Agricultural Engineering Research Center, which has professional capacity in making modern hives. They also received entrepreneurship skill development training.



Staff members of Tseganesh and Zelalem Woodwork Micro-enterprise, assembling Langstroth hives in their warehouse.

"The MOYESH project is unique. It has enabled us to improve our technical skills, our our businesses have been boosted through material support, and we have been able to diversify our portfolio and to find a ready, fairly priced market for the products," says Mr Zelalem.

He adds: "I believe I have become better entrepreneur. In fact, my dream is to venture even further into honey business, for example by exporting refined honey and beeswax, under my own brand name."

Since April 2021, the micro-enterprise has produced and delivered 2,900 frame hives to MOYESH project partners, individual beekeepers and government agencies, in Oromia Region and Southern, Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regions (SNNPR). It has also expanded its business, creating jobs for 28 people (17 male and 11 female), and generated a gross income of 5,477,800 ETB (USD 144,152). They have also produced and delivered 1000 nucleus boxes, which are used for swarm catching and colony multiplication.

Notes for Editors

The **More Young Entrepreneurs in Silk and Honey (MOYESH) project**, a partnership between the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (www.icipe.org), the Mastercard Foundation's [Young Africa Works in Ethiopia](#) initiative, and several Ethiopian public and private sector partners, is a five-year programme (2019 – 2024) being implemented in the Amhara, Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples' (SNNP) regions of Ethiopia. It is aligned to ongoing efforts to alleviate youth unemployment or underemployment in Ethiopia, aiming to create dignified and fulfilling jobs and income opportunities for 100,000 unemployed youth (60 percent of them women) through the honey and silk value chains. Additionally, the MOYESH project will also benefit 14.6 million people along the honey and silk value chains. Currently, the project has achieved 70 percent of its total youth target.

Mastercard Foundation seeks a world where everyone has the opportunity to learn and prosper. Through its Young Africa Works strategy and Canadian EleV program, the Foundation works with partners to ensure that millions of young people, especially young women, access quality education, financial services, and dignified work. Mastercard Foundation was established in 2006 through the generosity of Mastercard when it became a public company. The Foundation is independent with its own Board of Directors and CEO. For more information and to sign up for the Foundation's newsletter, please visit <http://www.mastercardfdn.org/> Follow the Foundation on Twitter at [@MastercardFdn](#)

The **International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (www.icipe.org)**: headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, is the only research institution in Africa working primarily on insects and other arthropods. The Centre conducts world-class science, and then translates this knowledge into innovate environmentally friendly, affordable, accessible and easy to use solutions to tackle crop pests and disease vectors. *icipe's* role also extends to the conservation and sustainable exploitation of the beneficial insect biodiversity. Thus, *icipe* works through the 4Hs Themes – Human Health, Animal Health, Plant Health and Environmental Health – a holistic and integrated framework that has sustainable development as its basis, to improve food security, health and the overall well-being of communities in Africa. We gratefully acknowledge the support of *icipe* core donors: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR); Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Government of the Republic of Kenya. *The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the donors.*