



Pioneering Peace-Driven Business Practices in Ethiopia: The story of Bezawit Kasahun, Co-founder and General Manager of Season GB Communication, Media, and Trading PLC.

As Co-founder and General Manager of Season GB Communication, Media, and Trading PLC, Bezawit Kasahun has not only strengthened her company's brand through effective marketing and management but also emerged as a business leader dedicated to social impact. Her participation in Initiative Africa's Business for Peace Fellowship was transformative, particularly the field visit to Tigray where she met with internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by conflict. This experience fuelled her commitment to making her business a force for positive change.

Upon her return, Bezawit proposed a comprehensive project to support IDPs in Tigray, focusing on vulnerable groups like women and children. She leveraged her network of clients and partners, encouraging them to collaborate on delivering critical resources such as food, clothing, and shelter. Her initiative goes beyond immediate relief, aiming to establish sustainable infrastructure, including schools and healthcare facilities, in Tigray's most affected communities. By addressing urgent needs and working toward long-term community resilience, Bezawit's vision is to create a foundation for peace and stability in the region.

Inspired by the fellowship, Bezawit also initiated a transition for her business into a "peace-led enterprise," positioning Season GB Communication as a model for socially responsible business in Ethiopia. She crafted a set of comprehensive guidelines that direct the company's communication, partnerships, and operations through a peacebuilding lens. These guidelines include allocating 3 to 5% of the company's annual profit to peace initiatives, with funds earmarked for community rebuilding projects, youth training in peace and leadership, and support for female-led enterprises in conflict-affected areas. Bezawit's vision is for Season GB to become a leading example of how Ethiopian businesses can actively contribute to rebuilding and stabilizing communities, especially in regions impacted by conflict. Her work not only enhances the company's social impact but also sets a standard for integrating business and peacebuilding, creating a ripple effect for sustainable development across Ethiopia.

In early August 2024, Season GB Communication's board has reviewed this proposal and approved that 4% of the company's annual profit to be used for further embed peace-centered values into the company's mission and strategy. The funds could support a variety of

impactful, well-structured activities. Below are some of the detailed project ideas she came up with:

1. Infrastructure Repair and Development projects

- Repair or rebuild schools in communities affected by conflict, equipping them with essential resources like desks, learning materials, and technology.
- Partner with local health organizations to repair clinics and supply medical equipment, focusing on primary care, maternal health, and child wellness.

2. Livelihood Recovery Programs

- Provide micro-grants to community members who lost businesses due to conflict, with a focus on small traders, artisans, and women-led businesses.
- Distribute seeds, tools, and other agricultural supplies to local farmers, encouraging food security and economic recovery.

3. Project on Community Dialogue and Reconciliation Spaces

- Fund the construction or restoration of community centers where people can gather for dialogue, conflict resolution workshops, and social events that strengthen social cohesion.

4. Peace Education Workshops

- Organize camps where young people from different backgrounds engage in peacebuilding workshops, leadership exercises, and team-building activities. These camps could culminate in a community project that allows youth to apply their new skills.

5. Skills Training and Vocational Support

- Select and train youth as "Peace Ambassadors" who can lead workshops on conflict resolution in schools and communities, creating a sustainable network of youth peacebuilders.
- Provide training in public speaking, negotiation, and conflict mediation, empowering youth to take on roles in local governance and civic organizations.

6. Inter-community Exchange Programs

- Facilitate trips where youth from different ethnic or religious communities can learn about each other's cultures, histories, and perspectives, breaking down barriers and promoting unity.

7. Financial Support and Training for Women Entrepreneurs

- Create an incubation program for women entrepreneurs, offering grants, business training, and mentoring to women who wish to launch or rebuild businesses.
- Partner with financial institutions to provide microloans to women entrepreneurs, supplemented with business planning workshops, financial literacy courses, and mentorship.

8. Networking and Market Access Programs

- Host annual trade fairs showcasing products by women-led enterprises, providing access to larger markets, and connecting them with buyers, suppliers, and investors.
- For businesses with growth potential, offer training in exporting, including quality standards, product packaging, and international trade regulations.

9. Public Awareness Campaigns

- Fund a media campaign to promote peace, resilience, and unity, using the company's media arm to share stories of successful community rebuilding and resilience.