



The Success of Dessalegn Masrie, CEO of Berhan Media and Entertainment Share Company: A Case Story from the Capacity Building Program for Ethiopian Business Executives

Dessalegn Masrie, CEO of Berhan Media and Entertainment Share Company, embarked on his journey with Initiative Africa's Business for Peace and Development Project's Business Executives for Peace Program following a recommendation from a close friend. Driven by a desire to contribute to Ethiopia's peace and development landscape, he actively engaged in all aspects of the program, including hands-on training sessions and insightful field visits in Bishoftu and Arba Minch.

Reflecting on his experiences, Dessalegn shares that the program has profoundly transformed his vision and sense of purpose. The program's skilled trainers and their case studies offered him a new perspective on the potential role of business in fostering peace. This inspiration ignited his ambition to pursue a PhD in Peace and Security Studies and to initiate research on how businesses can play a pivotal role in post-conflict reconstruction in Ethiopia. His research proposal, meticulously crafted with a deep commitment to positive change, seeks to explore the dynamic relationship between private enterprises and peacebuilding initiatives. He aims to bridge academic inquiry with practical application, creating a framework that not only advances academic knowledge but also serves as a model for community welfare and peacebuilding efforts.

In line with his mission, Dessalegn has implemented a weekly 15-minute television segment on Berhan TV, dedicated to promoting peace. This segment demonstrates his company's commitment to peacebuilding by highlighting stories of unity, resilience, and hope from communities across Ethiopia. His initiative extends the impact of the Business for Peace program, leveraging the power of media to foster understanding and reconciliation in Ethiopian society.

Leveraging his platform's broad reach and influence to promote "business for peace" ideals in a variety of impactful ways, he has planned the following activities to be implemented over a year's period:

1. Create a documentary series profiling Ethiopian businesses actively contributing to peace and social cohesion. Each episode could spotlight a different business, highlighting their peacebuilding practices, community engagement, and contributions to economic stability in post-conflict areas. By showcasing real stories, the series could inspire other business leaders to embrace similar values.

2. Introduce a Weekly "Peace and Prosperity" talk show or forum where prominent business leaders, peacebuilders, and social entrepreneurs discuss the intersection of business and peace. Topics could range from corporate social responsibility in conflict areas to innovative approaches for youth employment as a means of conflict prevention. This show could serve as a platform for idea exchange, collaboration, and thought leadership.
3. Collaborate with educational institutions or NGOs, Dessalegn's network could air an educational program tailored to young entrepreneurs, emphasizing the importance of ethical business practices, conflict-sensitive entrepreneurship, and the role of business in community building. This initiative could nurture a new generation of entrepreneurs who are mindful of peace and social impact.
4. Run a series of "Spotlight on Peace" - public service announcements (PSAs) that encourage businesses to adopt peace-centered practices. These PSAs could feature influential Ethiopian business leaders, peace advocates, and community members speaking about how businesses can foster economic stability, unity, and positive social change.
5. Sponsor a fellowship for young journalists to produce stories that focus on peace, conflict resolution, and the role of business in rebuilding communities. This fellowship could empower young voices while promoting a journalistic culture that values peace-oriented narratives and constructive reporting.
6. Develop a segment "Peace Economy" Case Studies and Success Stories or mini-series that explores successful business-driven peacebuilding initiatives from Ethiopia and around the world. By examining real-life examples of companies that have fostered peace through inclusive hiring, community partnerships, and ethical business practices, this segment could offer practical insights and inspiration for viewers.
7. Initiate a program that highlights stories of reconciliation and economic recovery in conflict-affected communities. By showcasing how local businesses have contributed to rebuilding efforts, fostering inter-community trade, or creating inclusive employment opportunities, the program would reinforce the idea that business is essential to post-conflict healing and prosperity.

Dessalegn Masrie's dedication to using knowledge as a tool for societal improvement exemplifies the values of intellectual curiosity and social responsibility. His journey underscores the transformative potential of the Business for Peace project, inspiring other business leaders to embrace their role in peacebuilding. Through his leadership at Berhan Media, Dessalegn has shown that business can indeed be a force for peace, bridging divides and contributing to a more unified, peaceful Ethiopia.