SUCCESS STORY

A Journey from Being Hopeless to Being Hopeful

Hilina Terefe¹, is 30 years women living alone in Addis Ababa Arada sub city Woreda 02 in rented private house. She has completed grade 8 and unable to continue due to family problem. Before 2 years, Hilina was with her husband & daughter and their many livelihoods had been dependent on the income she generates from selling of coffee & tea. Her husband was unwilling to engage in any jobs rather he usually beat and obliged Hilina to give him money for drinking alcohol & other non-essential personal expenses. This consecutive challenge leads her to engage in commercial sex work to fill her financial stress for the time being. But this brings another guilty feeling and discomfort in her emotions. She explains the situation as “It was an easy task to get money but I would not in a position to get mental rest from my customers who are married & youths who could not able to understand my HIV+ status and their high risk to be vulnerability risk.” While she struggles with her emotion discomfort and depression, she continues her engagements as commercial sex worker to fill her income needs and her husband continued unwelcomed behavior of looking her as money making machine. In between, Hilina repeatedly gets opportunistic infection & bad health situation which leads her to feel hopeless, unworthy and helpless.

During this period, her daughter was enrolled in program and assigned social service worker has identified her situation through her daughter which makes her fortunate to see another hope horizons. After the team meets and discussed with her, they insist to start her own business making journey to detach her from previous commercial sex working business. Then, she has received chips roasting machine based on her needs & a seed loan from individuals to purchase raw materials like potato, and edible oil to start roasting. This leads her to get income and profit from daily selling. She repaid her loan and completed the loan she has taken. Now, she becomes a member of Village Saving & Loan Association/VSLA/. She has started saving to expand her business.

Her enrolment on Gender Based Violence/GBV/ and SINOVYUO trainings helps her to re craft her further while she strives to aware and support others with similar cause. She has also received psychosocial support by Volunteer & Social service workers which makes her be strong, empowered & self-confidence to face her life challenges while maintaining her positive state of mind.

Hilina is now a role model and started to leads a peaceful and wonderful life by going through the pave opened for unguessable opportunities by unleashing her in-depth potential for business making and work commitment. She said that, now I started the journey from being hopeless to hope giving for others.

As part of her effort, she attends three months food preparation program training opportunity obtained from Woreda administration she belongs. This shines strong hope to expand her business to restaurant level as part of her dream which make her to live a life of her own vision!

Remark- This success story is originated from FHIDO, one of the 9 local implementing partners working with Mekdim Ethiopia National Association (MENA)

¹ Consent was obtained to use her identifiers for dissemination and awareness creation purpose