



## **YEEP-tech Phase 1 – Ethiopian Visit in Switzerland**

### **Learning from Switzerland – Learning from Ethiopia**



*The Ethiopian delegation before departure in Hawassa. From left to right: Muluneh Hailu, Temesgen Endale, Tesfaye Bayu, Fasika Bete, Eyuel Yone, Lijalem Mulugeta.*

From 24 November to 3 December, the Young Entrepreneur Exchange Project (YEEP, [www.yeeproject.org](http://www.yeeproject.org)) had the possibility to welcome 6 representatives of Hawassa University and the Hawassa Polytechnic College in Switzerland.

This visit, which is the first phase of a one-year cooperation project between Ethiopia and Switzerland, was partially funded by the Swiss Mobility Agency Movetia ([www.movetia.ch](http://www.movetia.ch)). It had 3 main objectives:

1. To create opportunities to compare the Swiss and Ethiopian education system and to learn from each other
2. To foster know-how transfer and to create inspiration for the Ethiopian partners
3. To set the ground for future collaboration between Ethiopia and Switzerland and the different Swiss partner institution

### Several attempts to getting started

Initially, the visit in Switzerland had been planned for November 2020. Due to the uncertainty and restrictions related to Covid, we were obliged to postpone the whole project by one year. But even in 2021 there were some obstacles to overcome: a very long deadline for visa application on the Swiss Embassy in Ethiopia, increasing uncertainties due to the Ethiopian civil war, and raising numbers of Covid cases in Switzerland exactly at the time of the visit. Finally, on 23 November early in the morning, we were very happy when we could welcome our guests at Geneva airport with a covid safe elbow bump.



*Finally getting started: Arrival at Geneva Airport*

In the train from Geneva to Bern, we had the chance for a first informal exchange. 4 of the guests had never been in Europe so far and they were very much interested to observe through the window of the train the changing landscape and the construction style of houses.

### Warmer clothes are needed

Despite the tiredness after the long flight, the Ethiopian group wanted immediately to start exploring Bern after we dropped off the luggage at the Youth Hostel. We booked lunch on the hill of Gurten with the hope that we would manage to raise above the fog and to have some sun. But the sun did not want to come out and we would have to wait several days in order to convince our guests that the sky above Switzerland is not always grey.

Before the trip, we had warned our friends that it could become very cold and that it was important to bring warm clothes for the visit. However, from an Ethiopian perspective it is probably difficult to estimate what «very cold» could mean.

Therefore, we had to equip the group with some Swiss standard «warm clothes» in order not to be freezing during the whole visit.



*Experiencing snow for the first time*

On the other hand, everybody enjoyed very much the first centimetres of snow, which was just enough to form a snow ball and to throw it at each other.

## A full programme with many impressions

We had set up an ambitious programme with 3 - 4 activities every day. All Swiss partner schools took over a few hours up to a full day, where the Ethiopian guests received an introduction to the school and could at the same time present their own institution and the Ethiopian education system. There also was time to get to know each other in order to establish a solid base of trust for future collaboration. Often, there was the possibility to visit a class and to get an insight into teaching activities. And in technical schools, there always was a part of the programme, where the guests could see and try out the machinery and the laboratories.

### Partner Institutions in Switzerland

- Höhere Fachschule Technik Mittelland (hftm)
- Höhere Fachschule für Wirtschaft Bern (HFW)
- Berner Fachhochschule (BFH)
- Berufsbildungszentrum Biel/ Bienne (BBZ)
- Centre Jurassien d'Enseignement et de Formation (CEJEF)
- Centre Interrégional de Perfectionnement (CIP)
- StudentImpact (HSG)

### Partner Institutions in Ethiopia

- Hawassa University, Institute of Technology
- Hawassa Polytechnic College

Besides the exchange with partner schools, we completed the programme with some additional visits, for example a guided tour through the FabLab of Bern, a visit at the Center for Entrepreneurship at University of Bern and a guest lecture at ETH Zürich.

In order to give enough time for informal meetings, there were different opportunities in the programme such as invitations for dinner at home with members of DEVENTURE or different leisure activities.

For a detailed overview of all visits and activities, check out the list on the next page.



*Dinner at home: Experience real Swiss culture and everyday life.*

### Summary of meetings and activities during the visit

Date	Institution/ main person	Content	Objectives
24.11.	FabLab Bern, Kurt Meister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit of the lab and the machines, discussion about lab's business model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get inspiration for establishment of a FabLab at Hawassa University</li> </ul>
25.11.	hftm Biel, Urs Schild	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with representatives of the school and students</li> <li>• Exchange about Swiss and Ethiopian education system</li> <li>• Discussion about next project phases of YEEP-tech (diploma thesis)</li> <li>• Defining new opportunities for further cooperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking/ getting to know each other</li> <li>• Setting the ground for further cooperation</li> <li>• Inspiration about the education system in Switzerland and about teaching methods</li> </ul>
25.11.	Swiss Smart Factory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit of the factory and the machines, inputs about production 4.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspiration from a high tech approach</li> </ul>
26.11.	University of Bern, Institute of plant sciences, Dr. Zerihun Tadele	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of Dr. Zerihun's research on Teff and his work between Ethiopia and Switzerland</li> <li>• Prestantion and discussion about the education system in Switzerland and Ethiopia</li> <li>• Discussion about the potential of developing engineering soultions for agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of Swiss and Ethiopian education system from an intermediate perspective (Dr. Zerihun knows both realities).</li> <li>• Networking for future door opening in the agriculture sector in Ethiopia</li> </ul>
26.11.	Bern University of Applied Sciences, International Office, Peter Eigenmann	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal discussion, lunch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain relationship in view of possible future projects with BFH (for example student exchange)</li> </ul>
26.11.	SmartIT, Andreas Walther	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop in MSTeams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish MSTeams as a common tool for further collaboration</li> </ul>
27.11.	Switzerland Promotion, Mimo Caci	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit of Emmental</li> <li>• Introduction in diary industry and cheese making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leisure time</li> <li>• Experience snow</li> <li>• Have another example of a supply chain in diary production</li> </ul>
28.11.	DEVENTURE, board and YEEP group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about DEVENTURE and YEEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to know each other, set the ground of trust for future cooperation</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion about the further development of the cooperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding structures of the partners in Switzerland and Ethiopia</li> <li>• Discuss and plan the next phases of YEEP-tech</li> </ul>
29.11.	Iterativ, Lorenz Padberg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the IT-company</li> <li>• Insight into the business model of the company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the business model of a small company that operates in a niche</li> </ul>
29.11.	University of Bern, Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, Prof. Arthur Baldauf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insights into the CAS on Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Discussion of challenges and solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get inspiration, how to work with the private sector and get funding for a university programme</li> <li>• Networking: establish contacts for future YEEP-editions (find Swiss participants)</li> </ul>
29.11.	Technorama Winterthur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit of the museum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting inspiration about science pedagogy</li> </ul>
30.11.	BFH-TI, Peter Brunner, Yacine Bouazdia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange about Ethiopian and Swiss education system and the curriculum of BFH</li> <li>• Visit of a class of system programming</li> <li>• Visit of robotics lab</li> <li>• Visit of living lab (health technology)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a personal relation in order to prepare possible future projects</li> <li>• Get concrete inspiration, for example in the field of robotics</li> <li>• Exchange about the education systems</li> </ul>
30.11.	WKS/ HFW, Christian Messerli, Michelle Steffen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion about the new competence oriented education model of WKS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a personal relation in order to deepen the existing collaboration</li> <li>• Get inspiration for developing the curriculum at Hawassa University</li> </ul>
1.12.	BFH AHB, Markus Schär	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion about education systems</li> <li>• Presentation of AHB's activities in other (African) countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check possibilities for new cooperation (AHB in Ethiopia?)</li> </ul>
1.12.	Movetia, Julia Grünenfelder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of Swiss and Ethiopian education system</li> <li>• Discussions about possibilities for funding future projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a clear idea, what could be future possibilities for exchange programmes</li> </ul>
2.12.	Atelier Busch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit of the factory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get an impression/ inspiration of a large production company in Switzerland</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of education system (dual system, enterprise plus school)</li> <li>• Visit of education minister of canton Jura</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the importance of the companies in the education system</li> </ul>
2.12.	CEJEF Porrentruy, Gérard Trouillard, Claude Maitre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the two ways of education, which the school offers (Apprentices, higher education)</li> <li>• Visit of a class</li> <li>• Visit of robo-labs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a first contact with the school (networking)</li> <li>• Check how to better integrate them for sending students to Ethiopia</li> </ul>
3.12.	BBZ, Matthias Dick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit of the school</li> <li>• Explanations about the apprentice system in Switzerland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a first contact with the school (networking)</li> <li>• Try to better integrate apprentices in the programme</li> <li>• Learn more about the dual education system and the role of the schools</li> </ul>



Meeting various institutions. From left to right: University of Bern, Institute of Plant Sciences. Swiss Smart Factory/ hftm Biel. BFH-TI, visit of the robotics lab.



*Discussing differences of the Swiss and Ethiopian education system at CEJEF, division technique (Porrentruy).*

### **Getting along with the Swiss public transport system**

Most of the time, the group was using public transport when going from one city to another. This brought also some challenges as trains don't wait even one minute. The good thing on the other hand is, that the next train usually is just a few minutes away...

Trains also played a role in our culture exchange programme and helped our guests to quickly become: From the beginning, the group had to take trains on their own without somebody to accompany them. It obviously is not so easy to understand the system and the strange names of places or to read time tables. The challenge became even bigger, when there was a police control in the train, when lines were interrupted and the group had to take a bus replacement service instead. With some guidance over the phone, the guests managed to overcome all these challenges and at the end of the visit all of them had become professional users of the Swiss public transport system.

### **What will remain? First conclusions**

In 10 days, our Ethiopian guests have received uncountable impressions, met many different institutions and persons and led various important discussions. However, at the end it is not the big numbers that count, but what will become of it. That is why the work has just begun. We have started to evaluate the trip and we are trying to systematically check for every encounter, what could be the potential. Some very concrete steps have already been taken, for example with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between hftm and Hawassa University, under which student exchange will be organised as from 2022 on.

The next step will be an online meeting with all partner schools in January. Nevertheless, the debriefing meeting with our Ethiopian guests and in the Swiss team already make it possible to draw a few preliminary conclusions:

1. The Ethiopian visitors managed to see all partner institutions, which is the first step for future collaboration. This relationship has now to be taken care of, for example by regular online meetings or a visit of the Swiss partners schools in Ethiopia.
2. The Ethiopian partners have now a clearer vision of the Swiss education system. And the Swiss partners can better understand the current challenges of the Ethiopian system. It will however be impossible to transfer large parts of the system from one country to the other. Small action like for example a stronger focus on collaboration between schools and enterprises seems however feasible.
3. There is no lack of inspiration, but, with a few exceptions (Memorandum of Understanding between Hawassa University and hftm concerning student mobility), this inspiration will not automatically turn into concrete projects. A systematic approach is needed to identify the interests of the different partners and to propose concrete projects for collaboration.
4. During the visit, there was only a limited exchange between Swiss partners from different schools. In order to increase this collaboration, more concrete efforts from all sides (schools, DEVENTURE) are needed. Possibly, a more informal approach like the participation of representatives of different school in projects in Ethiopia could be a first concrete step.



*Even the leisure programme in a Swiss cheese factory gave some inspiration about quality management*