



**YALI REGIONAL
LEADERSHIP CENTER**
EAST AFRICA • NAIROBI

Meklit Debebe Ejita

Cohort 46 – Ethiopia

Track - Business & Entrepreneurship

Promoting Afro-Tourism



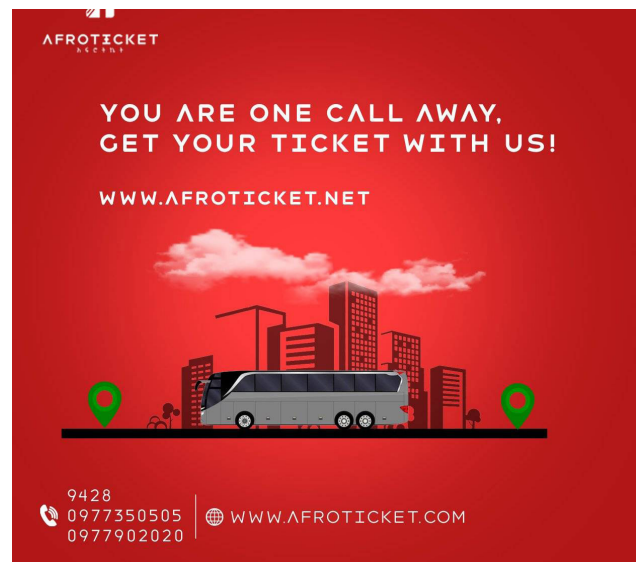
Debebe is an entrepreneur from Ethiopia, founder, and CEO of Afro Ticket. This is a company in the transport and tourism sector, solving the daily pressing issues of long-distance travellers, and tourists in Ethiopia. Travelers can book tickets via www.afroticket.net, via a telegram bot, or via a phone call for travelers who are not able to access the internet. In a male-dominated sector, Debebe is disrupting the transport and tourism system using technology.

The YALI program was a platform where she gained various skills, connections, and networks. “My arrival to Nairobi City for the YALI leadership program was transformational. I was impressed by the infrastructure and the businesses established in Nairobi. I couldn’t help but notice women’s empowerment in different sectors.”

Meklit’s learning journeys begin on the very first days of arrival, with the speeches made about inclusivity. Continued with immersive team-building activities. She met with other persons living with disabilities and these were eye-opening to the diversity and inclusivity at YALI. Team building activities helped her to face her worst fears, evaluate her negotiation skills, and gave her a valuable lesson on the importance of inclusion. She observed her teammate Samuel, a visually impaired participant doing the ‘high ropes’ with the help of his assistant Robert.

“I realized that YALI was not just inviting people to a party, but it made sure they dance with it! YALI gave everyone an equal chance to dance at the party! This was the most powerful lesson I learned in the first week. The details of power and inclusivity and how we not only can incorporate but also capitalize on diversity as a leader.”

The lessons on This is Africa and its collective resources, revealed various aspects on why the continent is a sleeping giant. The tourism industry collapsed due to the negative narrative about her country Ethiopia. As a young



African Leader, empowered by YALI, she is changing the narrative about Africa through her organization Afro-tickets by providing transport and logistic solutions.

Through the design thinking class, she learned a new problem-solving approach to implement in her startup. Melkit is leveraging on her networks from YALI RLC EA to create collaboration with the best minds from the 14 countries in East and Central Africa to enhance solutions in the transport and tourism industry in Ethiopia and the region.

It impresses her that someone took a chance on her. After commencing from the Center, her first assignment was to give back her learning experience.



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