

## SHARE OF EVENING PROGRAM MONEY - THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM?

Tilahun Workineh\*

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## INTRODUCTION

Evening programs<sup>1</sup> provide one outlet for educational demand. They are encouraged and expected to be self-financing. Some Ethiopian urban evening programs generate some extra money which has led to controversy between a group of teachers and the Ministry of Education (the Ministry). It is this conflict of 1991-92<sup>2</sup> that motivated this explanatory work which is based on documents and interviews with educators familiar with the conflict (see list of informants attached).

This recent conflict between a group of government secondary school teachers and the Ministry can have two or three explanations. One thesis holds that the core of the problem is the management of evening program money. A second one maintains that money is only the overt expression of one or more other covert motives. One of these covert motives may have been to attack and alienate the Ministry bureaucracy, as part of the euphoric political currents of the times. A third view, and one that underlines this work, maintains that the conflict is not an either-or-proposition because education is always subject to several factors operating

at once; one or two of which take prominence over others at a given time. In this particular case, the stronger monetary interest, articulated in the teachers' directive, may have been fuelled by a desire to attack the Ministry bureaucracy. This paper focuses on the principal factor - money.

## THE CONTEXT

### Financing Adult Education

There are two major schools of thought on the general question of financing adult-education (Coles, 1977<sup>3</sup>; Knowles, 1977; Kurand, 1989; Lowe, 1975; Swisbourne and Wellings, 1989; Woodhall, 1989). The proponents of free adult education argue that like school education or the education of the young, adult education is an investment whose benefit accrues to society. It was along this vein that the Tokyo conference on adult education (AE) in 1972, for example, recommended that member states should allocate a sufficient percentage of their national budget to AE (Bhola, 1989). In several countries like Nigeria, Sweden, India,

Tanzania, USA and others in Latin America, AE receives some money.

The protagonists of paid adult education maintain that adults must pay for their education because they have some income; adults will value their education more when they pay for it; and competitive fees can lead to program development and efficiency. A middle position supports free adult education programs advancing national development goals. For example, both developed and developing countries may not charge fees for school equivalency programs offering what is respectively considered to be the minimum, leaving other considered luxury or benefitting the individual to be self-funding. In many countries there is also the practice of charging fees to adults whose careers will clearly benefit from a particular course.

Money for AE comes from several sources, each with merits and demerits. The sources are the state and employers, learners themselves, income-generating activities, local and national contributions and dona-

tions and international assistance. Then, there are different cost sharing mechanisms between the parties involved. Finally several combinations of these generate money for AE (Knowles, 1977; Poggler, 1990; Swinbourne and Wellings, 1989).

The state can play the role of a financial provider. Governments must decide whether AE is a public service at public expense to all those who satisfy the specific program criteria or a consumer good for which people ought to pay in part or in whole. Government money requires a political clout which adult education does not have. Once a favourable decision is made there are other problems. Such money is not generally ear-marked for evening programs. Nobody also knows how much of this money eventually trickles down to such programs. Furthermore, any such money usually covers only salaries of skeleton office personnel and associated costs. In Ethiopia the Ministry set aside 1.7 percent of its 1990 education budget for AE to cover salaries of office personnel and office related costs (Zelleke, 1992). Besides, such money is characterized by small allocations, sudden and severe cuts

or even total withdrawals, restrictions and bureaucratic working procedures.

Learner fees are a major and relatively dependable source of money for evening programs, but it seems unwise to lay the whole burden on the participants without any subsidy. A complete dependence on fees can hinder those not unable to pay from participating. Revenue can also be seasonal and therefore is not a completely reliable source of money (Lowe, 1975). At any rate, if fees are to be charged, these must be considered: (a) the amount of subsidy available, (b) the socio-economic status of the clientele, (c) the intensity of learners' motivation, (d) the cost of instruction, and (e) the fees set by similar institutions or organizations (Knowles, 1977; Shaw, 1969). There is a general fear that when evening schools try and are pushed to be self-supporting, they can subordinate their educational objectives to the profit-making motive (Lowe, 1975).

### **Ethiopian Evening Program Finance**

The evening programs under discussion offer, under the ministry's supervision, academic, vocational/ technical and comprehensive programs to those unable to study on a full-time basis. These programs help satisfy the social demand for paper qualification. The learners are either employed or unemployed persons in and around Addis Ababa. In Ethiopia, some government money was available to one or two of the Addis Ababa pioneering evening programs (Tilahun, 1991). Assistance to these continued through 1949. But since the contravening ruling of the Board of Education and Fine Arts in November 1949, direct financial subvention to these schools has generally been discontinued. In fact, and as will become clear later on, there are schools in Addis Ababa that benefit from their evening program collections. Evening programs, now largely depend on tuition and other fees. Since their recorded beginning in 1942 up to 1977-78, these programs remained, in the main, a non-government responsibility, with minimum supervision.



Before 1974, secondary level evening programs charged monthly fees ranging from 8.00 to 15.00 Birr (Solomon, 1969). Separate registration, transcript, certificate and other fees were not charged. Administrative and financial matters were left to teachers' committees or teachers at the plant level, or to relevant closest education offices, in that descending order of frequency (Assefa and Alemitu, 1976). Regular teachers dominated the payroll. These were generally paid on a monthly basis. The payment varied from a little less than 10.00 to 60.00 Birr, according to grades taught.

These evening programs also had to contribute 10 percent of their monthly collections for maintenance and repair of the school. Haile Meskel Desta (1992) recalls that Menelik II School had, during his two years (1975 and 1976) of principalship, 190,000.00 Birr savings in the bank from these contributions. Hence school facilities have not been entirely free, as is widely propagated by the government and held by the public, for evening

programs. Today, evening programs receive no government money; but the government still continues to use evening program money to finance some schools (Negash, 1992).

The Ministry issued its first ever comprehensive directive for evening programs in September 1972 (Ministry, 1973). But this was overtaken by 1974 events. Following the changes in 1974, all the stakeholders of evening education complained about being exploited (Ministry, 1977). A 1976 proclamation nationalizing private schools put evening programs under the Department of Adult Education (DAE). After some preliminary studies by DAE, seminar and workshop deliberations and decisions by the different layers of the educational leadership, the Ministry issued a new directive in December 1977 to streamline evening program practice and redress the complaints (Assefa and Alemitu, 1976; Ministry, 1977).

Between 1977 and 1986, the directive has been revised four times, most revisions focussing on financial matters. On the whole and like its predecessor, the first post-1974 directive established a uniform

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fee schedule; provided for limited scholarships (free education); and institutionalized monthly instalment tuition fee payments. But unlike the pre-1974 practice, separate registration, transcript, certificate and "consumable materials" fees have been introduced. Evening programs also, unilaterally, have imposed a penalty fee of Birr 0.25 per learner per day for late tuition fee payment. Since neither the DAE nor the Department of Inspection do and can enforce these fees (see the following chart), there have always been variations among schools (Makonnen, 1992).

### FEES CHART

#### A. MONTHLY TUITION FEES (IN BIRR)

<u>Grade</u>	<u>1977 (A)</u>		<u>1979 (B)</u>	<u>1980 (C)</u>	<u>1982 (D)</u>	<u>1986 (E)</u>	
One	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE		
Two	FREE	1	1	FREE	2		
Three	2	2	3	3	3		
Four	2	2	4	4	5		
Five	4	4	5	5	6		
Six	4	4	6	6	7		
Seven	7	7	7	7	8		
Eight	7	7	8	8	9		
					(a&b)	(c)	(d)
Nine	9	9	9	9	11	12	15
Ten	9	9	10	10	12	12	15
Eleven	12	12	11	13	12	15	15
Twelve	12	12	12	14.40	14	12	15

**B. OTHER FEES (IN BIRR)**

No.	Category/Grade	2-6	7-8	9-10
1	Registration	0.50	1.00	2.00
2	Certificate and transcript (after 1 <sup>st</sup> free copy)	0.50	1.00	2.00
3	Consumable materials (monthly)		N O N E	0.00(a) 3.00(b) 3.00(c) 5.00(D)

Source: various DAE documents

Note: a: academic programs  
 b: comprehensive programs  
 c: home economics programs in voc./tech. schools  
 d: vocational/technical programs  
 A, B, C, D, E refer to the directives and/or fee schedules there in.

Revisions and interpretations of directives identified here as A, B, etc., for 1977, 1979, etc, respectively do not seem to have taken into account the opinion of learners and school personnel. Revisions were made without the participation of these persons. Directive E raise fees in practically all grades. The raises made in this directive ranged from a low of 12 percent (in E Grade 8) to a high of 200 percent (in Grade 2) and even 250 percent (in Grade 4). It also introduced differentiated fee schedules and material charges for the different program streams. If the charges are aggregated,

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schedule E raised the monthly payment by learners to 15.00, 17.00 and 20.00 Birr respectively for those in home economics, comprehensive and vocational/technical areas. These fees are not always affordable.

In a bid to raise the volume of money accruing to the schools, the Ministry has continuously reinterpreted "contributions" to the schools and has issued new stipulations about any excess money. The traditional 10 percent contribution, while remaining unchanged, has been interpreted differently. Directive A required 10 percent of the gross monthly collections. In B, the amount had to come from the monthly tuition fees only; then a meeting of the evening program staff would decide what to do with any extra money at the end of the school year. In a reversal move, C reinstated the A interpretation and rescinding B in part, it also required that any extra money be surrendered to the regular school. Directive E further stipulated that evening programs ensure that there is enough money for repair and maintenance of the school and purchase of consumable materials before signing contracts of payment with evening program personnel. Directive E in its part raised the volume of money collected but very much reduced the potential monthly earnings of program per-

sonnel who charged that they were being exploited.

That evening programs have a general tradition of making money is no matter of dispute. Several illegal and unprofessional means and ways are used by these programs to collect more money. First, there is the wide spread practice of charging more tuition fees, in some cases 100 percent, than what is prescribed (Makonnen, 1992). Tuition fee is a favourite category because it generates more money. Berhane Ethiopia and Tebebe Edegt junior evening schools charged double the official fee ostensibly because the evening learners were few and programs otherwise could not break even (Ministry, March, 1986). This same study found out that both in and outside of Addis Ababa, these programs charged more than the prescribed amount.

The second mechanism involves enrolling many more learners in evening classes than in the regular ones. Evening programs at central locations are more crowded than the regular program. Vocational/ technical evening programs are notoriously known for packing as many as three times of normal capacity into a class (DAE, July, 1984) and for offering theoretical lessons at the expense of practical ones (Aklog, 1992). It was reported once that these schools had, over an eight-year period, 1693 more

graduates in their evening programs than in the schools (Makonnen and Negash, 1992).

Other mechanisms include charging a daily penalty fee of 25 cents against each late tuition fee payee, reserving grades one and two, contrary to Ministry directives, for income generating higher grades; charging the upper limit where there are provisions for minimum and maximum fees; and, in some instances, using unofficial receipts (Makonnen, 1992). These practices together with irregular bookkeeping, lack of auditing, and lax supervision focussing only on curricular, not administrative matters lead one to suspect that there is some extra money in evening schools and that there is room for mishandling it.

Although evening programs are unwilling to show their financial books, there are indications that there is some extra money. This money is needed by both the Ministry and the teachers whose starting salary ranged from US\$ 170 to 350 per month. In a preliminary survey of four schools in 1985-86, for example, the same program reported first 96,000.00 Birr and then 185,000.00 Birr as excess money for the same year. Another program reported being in the red for two consecutive years, by 4,000.00 Birr each. While Entoto Comprehensive and

Vocational and Technical School may not be a good representative, some years back, it had a two-million Birr school maintenance project, financed partly out of evening program collections (Makonnen and Negash, 1992). According to a Hamele 28,1984 issue of Addis Zemen, the same school donated 10,000.00 Birr to the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission out of its evening program collections. Some of the larger schools in Addis Ababa have a monthly excess of 9,000.00 Birr after making their monthly contributions to the schools exceeding 6,000.00 Birr (DAE, July 1984). Unlike the low monthly salary, evening school remuneration varies according to the site of the school, the number of periods assigned; type of program offered; and the size of the evening program. The evening program administrator has to give everybody their "rightful" slice of the financial cake. Moreover she/he has to deal with complaints about not being selected to teach; requests for more evening periods; transfers to "the magnet" schools and to teaching assignment from office work (Aklog, 1992). In this process of accommodating the wishes of school personnel, the quality of evening instruction is very much compromised; classes are crowded; and there are serious question's about the qualifications of the evening teachers and the inflated payroll of evening programs (Department of Adult and Continuing Education, 1990, 1991).



The Ministry too wants the money to subsidize the under-financed schools. The various revisions made on the contributions, recounted earlier, are very telling about the interests of the Ministry. Under the pretext of a philosophy of self-reliance, the Ministry uses evening program money, in a reverse direction, to finance the education of children. For several years now, it allocates no operating budget to schools. Information released to DAE shows, for example, that Entoto, one of the largest evening programs, had surrendered over 6,400.00 Birr for each of the first three months of both 1984 and 1985 in meeting its 10 percent obligation only. During the same period, a very small school, Lieke Adegeh, contributed between 80.00 and 110.00 Birr per month (DAE, July, 1984).

## **THE CONFLICT DESCRIBED AND ANALYSED**

### **Description**

The overt motive for the 1991-92 conflict was certainly this monetary interest. A group of 23 government secondary schools in Addis Ababa formed an eleven-man coalition complaints committee, in accordance with a government complaints procedure. Instead of proceeding through the legal

complaints channel, the coalition first demanded the Ministry to legally recognize its newly developed directive on payment for over-time work, defined as teaching and/or tutoring during off-duty hours. Two of the stated objectives of the coalition's new directive were

- (1) to supplement teachers income and
- (2) to give the administrative and financial responsibility of evening programs to an elected committee, with an elected program director (Serdo, 1992).

The focal point of this directive was the money in evening teaching. Having received a negative response and desirous of riding over the existing fluid political environment, the coalition chose the strategy of directing its demand, in January 1992, through a letter, to the Addis Ababa Region Administrative Office (RAO) with copies to, among others, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), and Addis Ababa Teachers Association (TA) (Serdo, 1992). The TA was first to give its blessings to the demand. It is worth noting that this was a time when there were efforts to de-stabilize the national teachers association.

The RAO requested the PMO that the coalition and its directive be accorded a legal recognition (Mehammed, 1992). This action was utterly unprocedural, given the governments

complaints procedure. The PMO took a legally correct action by referring the matter to the Ministry because it then had jurisdiction over national education. The Ministry's response was again "No". This worsened the relations, in many schools, between program directors and teachers to the point of threatening the suspension of evening instruction. In March 1992, the PMO established a seven-man committee where the Ministry was represented by the Head of the Department of Adult and Continuing Education (DACE). The coalition was represented by two of its members; TA by one; RAO by one; and the PMO by two. Chaired by the education office of the PMO, the task of this committee was to evaluate the directives by the Ministry and the coalition in the light of teachers benefits and desires and submit a recommendation (Mehammed, 1992). But of the eight agenda items, the committee agreed to deliberate upon, "the terms of reference of the school director" and, to a lesser extent, "the composition of the evening school committee" became the bones of contention. The teachers favored neither the director's chairing the committee nor the representation of evening learners on the committee (Mammo, 1992). Unable to proceed, the committee dissolved itself after a twenty-hour meeting (over six days) and recommended that a neutral body be given the

task because the two sides took adversary positions instead of conciliatory ones (Mehammed, 1992).

Subsequently, two discussions were conducted in the PMO attended by eight members of the coalition, the Head of Administration and Finance Department of the Ministry, Head of the PMO's Education Office and one representative each of RAO and A.A. Region Education Office (REO). After briefings and discussions, the group was told to wait for an instruction. Leaving its own Education Office completely in the dark. The PMO then wrote to the Ministry in April 1992 stating that until a new education policy is issued, evening programs should elect their committees and their directors. Questions of clarification by the Ministry were rebuffed; the instructions were simply to be operationalized (Mehammed, 1992).

The Ministry then formed a committee chaired by the Head of the Inspection Department and consisting of teachers' representatives (2), the Inspection Department (3) and DACE (3). There were specific instructions from higher Ministry officials to the committee that most of the revenue should be left for the teachers, and elected evening school committees should have elected chairmen. The teachers left the committee at the first meeting because the committee refused to discuss "Pay for over-time work" as a separ-

ate agenda item. The Ministry continued work and produced, in September 1993, a revised directive. This was sent out to the schools for immediate comments.

The comment of the teachers' representative was solicited at a subsequent meeting in the Inspection Department. Present there was also a representative of the TA. The discussion did not last long. After a private conference, the teachers' representatives returned to the meeting only to say that they had no mandate to approve or disapprove the new Ministry directive. They suggested that the Ministry conduct a workshop on the directive (Yigez, 1992). The only reaction, written or otherwise, the Inspection Department got was from the hard liner, Shemillis Habte School; and this was a flat rejection, no specific reasons given, (Yigez, 1992).

### **Analysis**

There are reasons to believe that the teachers' financial interest was fuelled by motives extraneous to education, perhaps personal and selfish motives, though this may be difficult to pin point at this time. If the aim of the coalition was to help teachers supplement their salary, there are more teachers with lower pay at the lower

levels that should have been included. If the aim was to improve teachers' non-monetary conditions again, the problem, a larger one, should have gone through the local and national professional associations. The critical question is why only secondary school teachers? If still, the purpose was to offer educational services to the city's working population, there are more learners and would be-learners at lower levels and with no formal schooling. Therefore from both the educational and financial perspectives, what the coalition was attempting to do was to make 'the fat cow fatter'. Besides, there is nothing directly stated in the coalition's directive relating to the quality of evening school education about which everybody complains.

If the extra money was the real issue, it was neither difficult nor impossible for the teachers and the Ministry to resolve sooner. There were several options to explore. In principle, evening school programs operating in government facilities should not generate extra money. If and when they do, any such money can be ploughed back into evening program development, or can be shared, in part or in whole, at the end of the school year, on some rational basis. Or, an agreed-upon sum can be released for the schools and the balance shared. Another way is to put all extra money into a general

fund in a bank. Otherwise school personnel will keep on charging, and to some extent rightly so, that money earned through their labour should not go to subsidize the school system, at least not without their consent.

The conflict brought to the fore some behaviour that could tarnish the education profession. The coalition committee walked out of meetings with the Ministry. They changed their minds on matters and procedure agreed upon earlier. For example, they changed their minds about voting on some specific issue. They said they had no mandate over the revised directive. There was also a widely shared view, individually expressed among those interviewed, that at least some of the members of the coalition were persons with dissatisfaction about evening schools; persons with disciplinary problems; and persons suspected of advancing non-educational and personal causes.

Along this last line, there were gains and loses for the members. One member was dismissed from the committee. Another got a government appointment, and two at least got elected into the TA. The TA, too, played a less-than professional role. It was quick to endorse the demand. The TA could have played a more active role,

especially once the new officers were elected, if the exercise was aimed at solving educational and professional problems. A professional association could become redundant if teachers can simply advance their causes without reference to it.

The state intervention was, to say the least, intriguing and not without its share of problems. This was a local problem which emerged as a complaint. It could and should have gone through the legally established procedure. What was so pressing about the demand to claim the PMO's attention at a time when the government had just embarked on other gargantuan tasks of national scope? The case of the national professional association submitted much earlier was, for example, waiting for the PMO's attention. The scope of the assignment given to the committee by the PMO was rather limited. Such an occasion could have been exploited, or at least provided a launching pad, to scrutinize evening program administration, finance and academic offerings. The PMO's instruction to the Ministry, through a Megabit 1984 letter, to develop a provisional directive meeting the coalition's demands constituted a de facto recognition of a group of teachers outside the national professional association. This may have set a precedent which can be difficult for the state to deal with smaller groups instead of



umbrella organizations. The act can also weaken these umbrella institutions which are the corner stones of democracy. One point made in the letter was that the education policy would resolve the issue. In actual fact, this issue was too specific for any national policy document to deal with. It also turned out that, now (1994) that the policy is out, there is nothing about financing evening programs.

By a single stroke of the pen in Megabit 1984, the existing national directive of the Ministry was suspended. While this may be justified in the context of educational decentralization, this hasty approach further limits the assistance the central office could give to the regions until they have the necessary trained manpower. In other words, this approach will have, at least short term, harmful effects.

Finally there is difficulty in placing the new directive within the national and regional context. It can not be a national guideline because a) the coalition did not represent the nation's teachers and, more importantly, b) by government policy pre-college education is the responsibility of the regions, not the center. It is not a regional directive either; it was issued by the central office while regional councils

and education bureaux are in place. It could have been more instructive to the Addis Ababa region and others if the problem was resolved at the regional level.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Evening formal adult education programs in Ethiopia are expected to be self supporting. In Addis Ababa, some of these have been generating some extra money which led to a conflict between secondary school teachers and the Ministry. The overriding reason for the 1991-92 conflict was money. The teachers were interested in the money, not to improve the program or broader participation. With the PMO's intervention, teachers came out victorious; they have their committees. But that was it. As a follow up interviews with some teachers in Entoto Vocational Technical School, Menelik II and Yekatit 12 Senior Secondary Schools and General Wingate Construction School, for example, showed, for most school personnel and evening learners, things move pretty much like the pre-1992 days. There are no shorter payrolls, no better fee schedules; no better programs; no better teacher recruitment mechanisms; nor better earnings, even in 1994.

In the interest of learners, teachers and program quality and to ensure a modicum of

fair practice, the Ministry, if it is to continue to play a central role, could develop broad guidelines on fee schedule, academic studies, class size, personnel recruitment, minimum and maximum evening teaching loads and pay rates by level and type of instruction for urban and rural schools. The Ministry must also ensure that fees are affordable; that they are fixed after cost analysis; and that fee schedules, once set, are observed or enforced. Outside of these, the lesser control by a central agency, the better. Stated differently, the Ministry should limit itself to defining parameters within which evening programs manage themselves.

Subsidies by the Ministry must be part of the educational planning. A rational basis for Ministry charges to evening programs must be developed. As it is now, the 10 percent and other charges have no solid ground. That evening programs should assist the development of education should not be an excuse for 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'. As things were, the step-child (evening adult education) has become the step-father. More than any body else, the Ministry should understand and recognize the plight of its teachers and should do everything possible to encourage every legitimate means of supplementing their low salary. The Minis-

try missed a chance; this recent encounter with secondary school teachers could have been used as an opportune moment to conduct a comprehensive study of evening programs their administration, finance as well as program content. Last but not least, the government should avoid double or may be triple taxation of its teachers.

The acts and behaviours of the coalition committee, for example, focussing only on money matters, may have tarnished the education profession. Professional educators, too, must not witness or even contribute to the qualitative decline of evening programs by making them 'the financial Ark of Noah'. Teachers must help evening programs become better. The directive of the coalition, for example, does not say much about qualitative improvement. Could they, for example, organize and commission a group to study evening education? with the extra money evening programs have, this should not prove difficult.

Teachers and school principals, first as professional educators and then as citizens, must do everything possible for the advancement of education. Education needs the support, financial and otherwise, from every corner; obviously, the government alone can not do it. The existence and functioning of school facilities and services are the corner stones of the over-time work. None

of this can be undertaken if schools somehow become non-functioning. If there is the will, teachers can offer the school an annual bonus, for example. Some of the extra money generated can be used to avoid over-crowding by employing more teachers; old equipment can be replaced by new and practical classes can increase. Lastly, they must guard their profession from being used for selfish personal ends.

The new coalition-committee-initiated directive does not allow learner participation in the management of evening schools. The committee also made a big issue out of this at the meeting with the Ministry. Discussions held in the PMO's office and the committee meetings in the Department of Inspection of the Ministry did not involve learners. Adult learners take responsibility and become committed when they are involved in decisions affecting them. After all, they are paying for their education. To exclude adult learners from the decision making process is both andragogically and democratically bankrupt. They must be allowed to participate.

### NOTES

1. Several terms are used to refer to evening learning. "Program" is preferred here to keep the distinction between the school to which most evening programs in Ethiopia are subordinate and to avoid the repeated references to "evening school" and "regular school" or "day school" which, strictly speaking, are not opposites.
2. Most Ethiopian documentary sources carry Julian dates. These have been translated into approximate Gregorian dates in the text. The bibliographical entry however carries the dates in the original source.
3. The reference is an alphabetical arrangement of published sources and interviews. This is immediately following by a list of Amharic sources with authors' names only in English, for the readers' convenience.

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Interviews. Ato Aklog is teaching  
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Vocational Technical School.

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Tilahun Workineh

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