



Case Study: Nesteho, 21

# “A Fresh Start: Nesteho’s Journey from Uncertainty to Entrepreneur”



## **Story Summary:**

21 years old, Neteho is a testament to resilience and ambition. Her journey began with a spark of hope: life skills, financial literacy and entrepreneurial training from CAAP. That spark was fueled by a financial grant of a revolving fund from the flourishing community-based Saving and Credit Cooperative (SACCO)—a initiative she helped build with other women in her Somali region village, powered by CAAP’s initial capital funded through the UN-Women.

Today, that hope has blossomed into “Neteho’s Juice and traditional coffee House,” a vibrant business she proudly runs from a rented space along the main Dire Dawa-Djibouti highway. Here, she crafts a delicious variety of fresh juices (Avocado, Mango, Papaya and banana), her dedication attracts a growing stream of customers drawn by both her refreshing products and her inspiring story.

## Nesteho's story in her own words (Quotes):

My name is Nesteho. I am twenty-one years old and live here in a village in the Somali region with my parents and siblings. After high school, I felt lost—without a job and without direction. I tried starting a small business, but it barely survived. Just when things began to feel hopeless, I saw a notice on the local administration board.

That notice was for CAAP's entrepreneurship program, which focuses on empowering women with life skills and financial training. I jumped at the chance. After meeting the preliminary requirements, I enrolled in the training, and it turned out to be a life-changing experience. It didn't just teach me the value of work—it gave me confidence. I learned how to manage a business, connect with customers, and handle finances. It was a dream come true.

With the skills I gained from the training and the startup capital I received, I immediately launched a juice house and a traditional coffee roasting shop. Now, I am the owner of my own business. I serve fast food and have built a loyal customer base that trusts what I offer. I earn a steady income, and on a good market day, I can make a profit of 2,500 birr or even more. With my earnings, I'm able to repay my loan from SACCO and regularly add to my savings there.

Thanks to the consistent income from my business, my financial troubles have eased significantly. I feel I'm now on a solid path to change not only my life but my family's future as well.

Right now, I am bringing fruit from Dire Dawa, but my dream is to soon start my own fruit wholesale business. That way, I can supply other customers and always have the freshest ingredients for my own juice shop.

Not long ago, I had no idea what to do with the leftover fruit after making juice—until a neighbor suggested I could use it to feed animals. Now, I'm planning to raise my own animals in my backyard. I won't have to worry about what to feed them, since I'll have plenty of byproducts from my juice house to provide.

These days, I've learned how to grow my business and save for my future. I'm no longer the woman who felt lost and uncertain—I am a resilient business owner in control of my destiny.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank CAAP, UN Women, and the SACCO for the unreserved support they've given me and the other women in our community. I hope their support continues for some time, until our situation improves and until we can truly stand on our own two feet."

## Project background:

The Resilience and Institutional Support to Empower Women in Somali Region (RISE Project) is implemented by CAAP with funding from UN Women from August 2024 to December 2026. With an investment of ETB 47.6 million, it directly supports 1,004 women from IDP and host communities.

The project focuses on:

- Climate-smart agriculture (training, drought-tolerant seeds, irrigation support)
- Enterprise development & financial inclusion (SACCOs, revolving fund loans).
- Business Skills training & market linkages (Basic business and life skills training, business development services, business plan competitions, incubation, technical support).

The Climate-smart agriculture targets 200 vulnerable women farmers to access to climate resilient technologies including drought resistant, early maturing and multi-purpose seeds, farming tools, poultry, small ruminant livestock, improving access to safe drinking water and supplying irrigation and gender Responsive agricultural extension services, reaching 1,458 community members (846 restored when opportunities are accessible

Business Skills training: 100 women SACCO members received basic business and life skills training, business development services, business plan competitions, incubation, technical support). of them are women and girls) Barwaqo SACCO, established under the project, is providing revolving fund loans of ETB 100,000 each to 160 women. Beneficiaries like Nesteho represent how women's resilience and leadership can be.

## Key Results & Impact

Economic Empowerment: Beneficiaries like Nesteho shifted from unemployment and dependency to income-generating entrepreneurship.

- Loan Repayment & Savings: Revolving fund mechanisms ensure sustainability while promoting financial literacy.
- Community Role Models: Young women demonstrate to peers that safe, local livelihoods are possible

alternatives to unsafe migration.

- Contribution to Policy & Donor Priorities: The case aligns with the Somali Region Multi-Year Resilience Strategy, Ethiopia's Ten-Year Development Plan, and UN Women's Strategic Note (2021–2025) by advancing SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

The establishment of the local SACCO has been transformative for women and girls in the community with no access to financial services. By offering accessible credit and loans with minimal preconditions, it has opened doors to financial independence that many thoughts once were out of reach. Now, women are actively engaging in successful businesses—both on and off the farm—that not only provide income but also instill a sense of pride, dignity, and independence.

This economic empowerment has allowed women to contribute meaningfully to their households and the broader community, strengthening local economies and fostering a renewed sense of hope and possibility. Their success is no longer just personal—it's a collective triumph.

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For any details on this story and to learn more about

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