

“The training has helped us women a lot. It has created jobs for us.”

Mekdes Assefa

PVH garment factory worker in Hawassa Industrial Park. She was graded and sourced by Hawassa Grading and Sourcing Center followed by soft skill training; which is supported by Enterprise Partners.



Mekdes Assefa is a 19 year-old garment factory employee working at PVH in Hawassa Industrial Park.

She first heard about garment work in the Hawassa Industrial Park from her Daka 01 Kebele, as well as from her neighbors, and friends. As a 10th grade student and single mother of a young son, she said that she wanted to find opportunities to further advance herself both economically and socially.

In the fall of 2017, Mekdes began her journey at the Hawassa Grading and Sourcing Center, in Hawassa, Ethiopia. With no prior experience in seamstress work, she feared that she would not adapt to the work, or that she would find it extremely challenging.

To her surprise, she has not only managed to do well, but she flourished. She initially passed the examinations at the Hawassa Grading and Screening Center, and began a 5-day training program to learn sewing. As a result of her high scores during training, Mekdes was recruited by the PVH factory where she began another 5-day training on sewing sleeves, as well as a 5-day soft-skill training program.

Speaking with Mekdes, her excitement in discussing the impact of the soft skill training she received is evident. She indicated that she learned about things she had never known before. During her soft skill training, she was given a notebook to record her finances. She was taught on how to save money, opened a bank account with Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (also located in the compound), and how to balance her checkbook. She learned the nature of working in a factory, by developing skills in areas such as time management. According to Mekdes, her life has changed as a result of the trainings she received. She enjoys her work environment, and says that PVH has several incentives, such as holiday bonuses and a positive work environment. She told us that the benefits she receives from PVH make her feel supported, and cared for overall.

Mekdes says that her dream is to one day to open a garment manufacturing company, like PVH to employ youth and women. According to her, the Hawassa Industrial Park and the training they continue to receive has opened doors for her, and will continue to do so for countless women.