



PERSONAL PROFILE

My name is Akhilu Tadesse who is one of the Alemaya Agricultural College graduates in 1985. In line with the communication I had with the organizing committee, I am pleased to share my personal profile in this briefly organized written account.

The inspirational advice I got from my teacher in my Junior Secondary School had certainly instilled confidence in me to plan my future educational destination. Ato Arefeayne Berehe was my Science and mathematics teacher in grade 8. He completed his third year Animal Science courses in Alemaya Agricultural College (AAC), and was sent to my area to deliver a one-year mandatory Field Service Program. By the end of the year, grade 8 students were to sit for a Ministry Examination. Just before the examination date, Ato Arefeayne (later he completed his PHD programme, and remained in AAC as a lecturer in Animal Science Department) approached one of my class mates and I and critically advised us not to register for any of the vocational schools, he rather positively influenced us, with full sense of sincerity, to aim at joining The Haile Selassie First University in AAC. The advice I got then inculcated at the back of my mind all the way through my academic journey in the secondary high school, and later on gave me a drive to pursue university education in AAC. Both my friend and I joined AAC in 1974 and that occasion brought a mix of surprise and happiness to Doctor Arefeayne and that opportunity further strengthened our connections in the campus.

Completed the first semester of the freshman courses, and went on for the second semester till end of May, 1974. Nonetheless, radicalized by the student movements, mainly 'Land to the tiller' slogan, and popular uprisings across the country, I formally withdrew the college, along with a number of my fellow students, just by the end of the second semester. Following that development, I joined one of the projects (EPID) in the Ministry of Agriculture and stayed there for a while as a voluntary service provider for the rural farming population. Fortunately I then happened to get a full time employment opportunity in Coffee Improvement Project (CIP), as the capacity of Extension Agent and stayed there for a couple of years.

The various odds and unbearable challenges overwhelmed the entire country between 1974 and 1982 had never deterred me from fulfilling my earlier aspiration; completing agricultural education in AAC. Following my formal application for readmission, The College readmitted me by the middle of 1982. Graduated in Plant Sciences in early 1985. With no moment of hesitation, I again joined CIP in the same year, and assigned at one of the major coffee producing areas, and later on was transferred to various project areas. By the end of 1994, I joined an organization named as Agri-Service Ethiopia (ASE), and stayed there for about 12 years. ASE was one of the oldest indigenous NGOs in Ethiopia and remained active in rural development since its establishment in 1969. The organization was a center of excellence in community training. At this juncture, I would like to express my gratitude to ASE for allowing me to attend my post-graduate studies in the Netherlands. That opportunity enabled me to hold a master Degree in Development Studies. The next and last organization I served was named as TechnoServe Ethiopia (TNS). I joined TNS in 2010 and was assigned in Jimma at the capacity of Field Manager. Until the termination of the programme, I served there for about 9 years. TNS is a USA-based International NGO. Its key focus areas in the coffee sector are improving farming and processing practices, and strengthening supply chains, among others.

During my tenure in the organizations, I provided overall leadership and coordination roles for ensuring the implementation and accomplishment of the objectives of the programmes. Over my service years, I had been assigned to execute various technical and leadership tasks, which enabled me to build up extensive experience. Having started my career from the lowest field level tasks and traversed my way up the ladder of responsibilities, I have amassed enough experience on the overall challenges and limitations involved in the different development approached.

Presently, I am at retirement age, live in Yeka Abado/Addis Ababa, and watch momentous events around me and across my country.