

Discrimination? Scandal? Disgusting Story? What?

Usually, professional Ethiopians travel to Germany for further education (for Masters and PhDs) from Universities and Ministries based on Government-to-Government Communications. GTZ, DAAD and GED are the three familiar organizations in this issue. And anybody who knows how these organizations function will tell us that they work closely with Government of Ethiopia. The chance that any Ethiopian professional will secure scholarship in Germany through GTZ, DAAD and GED without the consent of the Ethiopian Government is next to none. As the Ethiopian Government agrees to send professionals for postgraduate education in Germany, its expectations need no explanation: those professional will come home after they completed their education.

In response to Mr. Gebriye's article entitled "Ethiopians Unwanted in Ethiopia: Hard to Believe But True", I think of the following possible groups of Ethiopian Professionals and/or German Professionals of Ethiopian Origin in Germany.

Group 1: Professional Ethiopians Sent to Germany for Higher Education (Post Graduate) through the Consent of the Government FDRE, But Remained There for Various Reasons, and/or Excuses.

Group 2: Professional Ethiopians Traveled to Germany for Higher Education (Post Graduate) by Themselves.

Group 3: German Educated Professional Ethiopians Left Ethiopia for Economic and/or Political Reasons During the Government of the Dergue and Have Legal Living and Working Status in Germany.

Group 4: German Educated Professional Ethiopians Left Ethiopia for Economic and/or Political Reasons During the Government of the FDRE and Have Legal Living and Working Status in Germany.

Group 5: German Educated Professional Ethiopians Left Ethiopia for Economic and/or Political Reasons During the Government of the Dergue and FDRE Have Refugee Status in Germany.

Group 6: Professionals of Ethiopian Origin (and Citizens of Germany) Who Are Educated in German Starting Kindergarten

Group 7: Professionals of Ethiopian Origin (and Citizens of Germany) Who Are Educated in Germany Starting Undergraduate.

I am not trying to imply that the Grouping is conclusive. But it helped me to figure out which Group would have legitimate complaint and which Groups are simply getting noisy.

It looks clear to me that any reader can figure out which Group has more members. At the same time it appears clear to me that which Groups include very few members (Groups 2, 6 and 7). It is obvious that Group 5's complaints would be to get rid of EPRDF and the issue raised by Mr. Gebriye would be of little importance.

In Group 4 we can have professionals holding Ethiopian passport. Those who believe that they had legitimate reason to abandon their country in the first place would need EPRDF to be dethroned. I don't expect

them to complain about any sort of discrimination. Their wish would be far more. Some members of Group 4 with German passport (if any) may play such a game. But I wouldn't take it as honest.

Let me come to Group 1, which I believe is the most populous one. Now, let us see the following scenario (Scenario 1) about two hypothetical Ethiopians sent to Germany for postgraduate education by the Government.

Scenario 1: *Abebe and Bekelle were sent to Germany for postgraduate education at the same time in similar fields of study. After completing their study, Abebe fulfilled his obligation (legal or moral) and get back home. Then, the Institute of Agricultural Research in Melkasa employed him at a salary of 3000 ETB. Whereas, Bekelle stayed in Germany for a couple of years and obtained an employment with GTZ at a salary of 1500 Euro to work in the Institute of Agricultural Research in Mersa.*

What would Abebe and other patriotic professionals feel? This Scenario is sufficient to discourage the Government not to do a favor for those of us who do not deserve to have it.

Now let us see Group 3. Members from Groups 4 who lately reconcile themselves with EPRDF may also be included. In this case too, I am trying to show a possible scenario (Scenario 2) that is discouraging for the Government to advise German NGOs to hire Ethiopian/Ethiopian origin without precondition.

Scenario 2: *Abebe and Bekelle were best friends. They were two little fellas when hired as graduate assistants at the department of Geography at AAU in 1980. They had similar grievances about the Dergue. Anyways they were lucky to secure their PhD from Germany in Urban Planning in 1988, and both came back home. Whereas Bekelle stayed home and continued his service at Sidist Kilo, Abebe came up with fresh excuses about the Dergue and left the country in 1990. He secured the necessary conditions to live and work legally in Germany. After the fall of the Dergue, Abebe made few friends from EPRDF and started contemplating to come back home. Coincidentally, GTZ is looking for an expert in Urban Planning for its project in Ethiopia at a whopping monthly salary (six month's gross salary of Bekelle).*

Wouldn't this make Bekelle say “ኢትዮጵያ ሃገሬ ሞኝ ነኝ ተለላ፣ የሞተልኸ . . .”

We are arguing that the Government has to employ Ethiopians without any precondition. What about the will and readiness of those of us who demand that? We neither have the will nor the readiness to work for our country like our friends do, but we talk about discrimination. We are not ready to return to the Ministries and institutes who sent us to pursue our studies, but looking for big paying NGOs. Is this not beyond discrimination? An employee who is not ready to work in Ethiopia should not blame the Government. If GTZ could not find Germans for its project, there are German Educated Ethiopians right in Ethiopia, and those must be given the priority. And they deserve it.

AIGA Reader

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