



Dr. Abebech Gobena

1935 – 2021

**“I never put a price
on a child.”**



“I have no children of my own but I have a family of hundreds of thousands and I have no regrets.”

Dr. Abebech Gobena – Mother of Many

Dr. Abebech Gobena was born from her father Ato Gofe Heye and her Mother Wosene Biru on October 20, 1935 in North Shoa Gerar Jarso Woreda Torben Ashe Kebele in the Village Called Shebel Abo. Since her father, Gofe Heye, was killed by Italian invaders at her age of one, she grew up by her grandfather Heye Bedissie.

According to the culture of the time, her mother allowed Dr. Abebech's marriage at her age of 11. However; she hated the forced marriage and it was no longer after her marriage that she was summoned to her mother's house for ceremony. She used that ceremony as an opportunity and disappeared from home village and left for Addis Ababa under very difficult situation. After moving to Addis Ababa, she started working in different private business companies and later running her own private business. She was married to Kebede Koster on May 5, 1961 and lived a peaceful life for more than 20 years.

During that time, she expanded her social life and participation beyond her personal lives: visiting monasteries and committed herself helping religious fathers to fulfill her religious duties.



As part of her commitment, she made a significant contribution in the committee set up to build the road to Gishen Mariam, as confirmed from the certification given for her contribution.

In 1980 on her pilgrimage to Gishen Mariam's annual celebration, she saw many people displaced from their homes and being in shelters due to a severe drought and famine in the area. Because of the horrible condition there, the children were left unattended. Observing the tragic situation in the area, the compassionate mother brought two children with her to Addis Ababa and laid the foundation for today's "Abebech Gobena Child Care and Development Association".



The first two children of Dr Abebech Gobena

Since then, she had abandoned her peaceful marriage and continued caring for children and her humanitarian work. She went on caring for hundreds of thousands of children till their self-sufficiency, for the past 41 years. In addition, she had supported more than 1.5 million people through different poverty alleviation programs. Among the areas of intervention:

1. Reached hundreds of thousands of children through different life saving programs and supported till their self-sufficiency.
2. Improved the lives of thousands of women and taken care of their children.
3. Opened vocational training centers to build the capacity of women and trained thousands of needy women and qualified them for a job.
4. Built and furnished two schools in Burayu and Addis Ababa with the name of the Association and has been providing education to low-income children and children with no education opportunity, and qualified most of them for higher responsibility.
5. Helped thousands of women in Addis Ababa and Oromia accessing credit and savings services.
6. Contributed significantly in environmental protection by growing and distributing more than 100,000 seedlings every year.

7. Created various income generation activities such as traditional food preparation, knitting, food oil production, print on clothes, crafting, sewing, embroidery, carpeting, weaving, poultry, livestock, dairy, gardening, mill service, making mead, making traditional clothing and gift items.
8. Provided food grains, clothing, and agricultural seeds to thousands of households in Oromia and Addis Ababa.
9. Constructed more than 50 water points, hand dug wells, potable water and made ready for use.
10. In collaboration with other charity organizations, built many schools, adult education centers, sports fields, fences; and handed them over to beneficiaries.
11. Built 27 non-formal education centers in Oromia region, equipped with the necessary manpower, materials and undertaken training for three years, before handing them over to the government.
12. Built TVET institute in Fiche Town and handed it over to beneficiaries
13. Repaired houses of 350 households and handed over to beneficiaries.
14. Built more than 350 kitchen houses, market shops and toilets and made ready for services.
15. Build a special maternity and pediatric hospital to reduce child misery and maternal mortality.
16. Provided support to those affected by natural disasters in Wollo, North shoa, Diredawa, South Omo and many more.
17. Thinking end of hunger in mind, constructed irrigation dam, and ensured food security for thousands of families.
18. Made enormous contributions to HIV/AIDS awareness when stigma and discrimination was high and awareness was limited in the country and made incredible changes in the community.
19. Supported thousands of families with HIV in their blood with materials, cash, capacity building and provision of shelter, care and treatment.
20. Arranged provision of education in family planning and reproductive health and brought about social and behavioral changes, dramatically increased the coverage of family planning and reproductive health services in the intervention areas.
21. Made significant contributions to infrastructure development, capacity building, health and family planning, education, and agricultural development, in Addis Ababa and Oromia region.

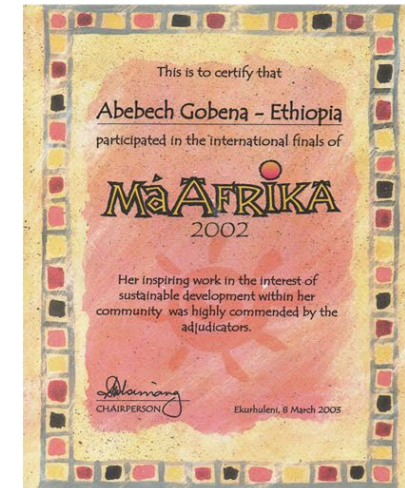


Dr. Abebech Gobena (Edaye) received great awards and recognitions from various national and international institutions for her life time, exemplary and pridelful work; and becoming a role model for humanity, and living role model for women. Among the awards:

- Honorary Doctorate Degree in Humanities from Jimma University
- Madelia and Certificate of Merit from Addis Ababa University

- The Second World Food Program International Women's Day Award Honors
- Cup and Certificate of Merit from United Nations Association of Ethiopian, Family Federation for world peace and united nations volunteers program
- Certificate of recognition of contribution to the silver Jubilee anniversary of CCRDA
- Certificate of Merit and Cup from Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
- Ambassador for Peace, Certificate of Merit, from Interreligious and International Federation for world Peace
- Certificate of Merit , Cup and Madelia from Ethiopian Airlines
- Group Spain Award in Support of humanitarian action
- Certificate from Women's Economic and Political Endeavors
- Certificate and cup of Regional Winner Central Africa for exemplary and inspirational work in the interest of sustainable development for Africa

- 2004 World Business Awards "London World Aware Business Award"
- At the African level, Ma Africa (Mother Africa) from South Africa
- Awards and certificates from the Prime Minister office in different times
- Various awards from the Addis Ababa City Administration Mayor's Office at different times
- Incentives and accolades from various national ministries
- Moreover, she received many incentive awards from various international organizations and more than a hundred other prizes



Taking into account the enormous humanitarian deeds of Dr Abebech Gobena, many organizations are named after her. These include the following:-

- ▶ Abebech Gobena Mothers' and Children's Hospital in Addis Ababa, a large hospital, which is the first of its kind in the country,
- ▶ Salale University Abebech Gobena Campus College of Health Sciences,
- ▶ Ambo University Abebech Gobena Agricultural Research Center,
- ▶ Moreover, two private banks and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia named their branches in Addis Ababa after her.



Honorable Dr. Abebech (Edaye) believes "Poverty, especially child misery, can be alleviated not by the amount of money that is thrown at individual level, for charity, but by bringing our capacity and potentials together and making organized support for our people suffering, especially through empowering women."



At last, honorable Dr. Abebech (Edaye) in the challenging 41 years organizational leadership, she had undergone multiple surgeries and was living with pacemaker on her heart, for over 16 years. Since some time, due to her health problems and aging, she had been getting care, follow up and assistance by physicians at home.

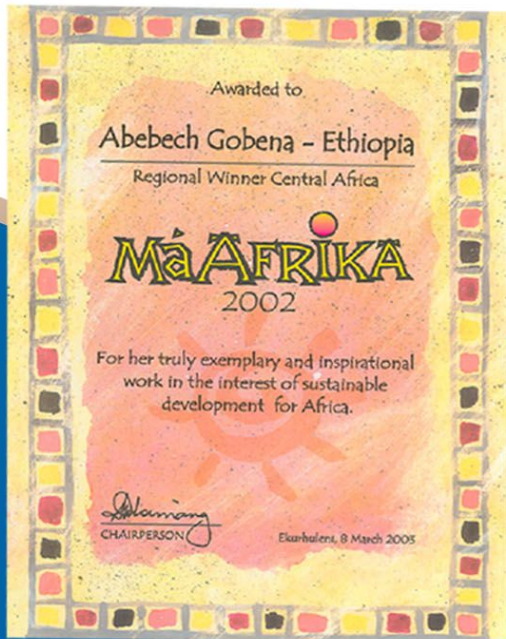
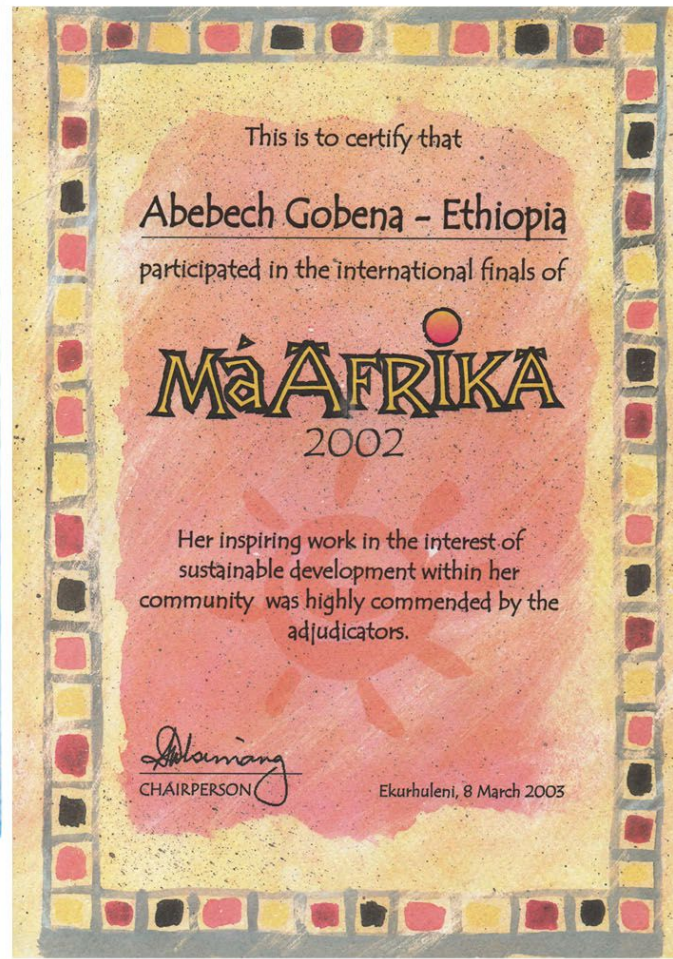
Hence, Dr Abebech Gobena passed away at her age of 85 due to COVID-19 on Sunday July 4, 2021 morning after treatment in intensive care at St Paul's Hospital.

The work of the kind and compassionate mother is beyond the grave and will be remembered as a role model, forever.

Heartfelt condolences to her relatives, the helpless infants and children, her supporters and partners!
May our loving Mother's soul rest in peace in paradise! Amen!

July 2021
Addis Ababa





Some of the Most Valuable International Awards of Dr. Abebech Gobena



Thanks to Menschen für Menschen Switzerland for its financial support for the publication of this biography and to Addis Ababa City Administration for the overall arrangement of the funeral ceremony as well as to all who supported us. We are very grateful to St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College for its dedicated efforts to save our mother by providing enough health professionals.




Menschen
für
Menschen

Karlheinz Böhms Äthiopienhilfe
Switzerland 


Mother Teresa of Africa



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