

## Frealem (Fray) Shibabaw

An Entrepreneur, development professional, she currently manages Bahirdar Academy, a school that she established in 2001. The academy serves 2,750 students from KG to grade 12 and has created employment opportunity for 230 full time staff. Fray has introduced in her school the concept of “Mothers’ Room” for nursing moms from a conviction that a mother who leaves her baby unattended at home cannot be successful and peaceful at work.



Fray also cofounded and was a former president of Amhara Women Entrepreneurs Association, the second largest private association in the country and has helped women who are micro business operators for the last 12 years. In this association, Fray has introduced the involvement of men for the success of women.

Fray is a strong advocate of local school meal programs for sustainable livelihood. Based on her experience from working with women and children, she is starting a school meal project in Ethiopia and plans to establish a national school meal system in partnership with the Ethiopian government. The project is geared towards bringing social transformation to the children of Ethiopia through creating school kitchens in every school. Fray believes that in addition to securing the nation’s children through the provision of meals from the school kitchens, this program will bring about tangible changes in gender roles. In the school kitchen, children as well as the community learn about nutrition and boys too can cook.

She also strongly believes that schools are strategic sites for social transformation in developing countries.

**Talk topic: School kitchens as agents of social transformation**