

## Fighting back through volunteering



*Mukemil Nursebo: TB Survivor. Photo credit Birhane Tadesse*

Mukemil Nursebo Umar is 32 and he is a father of one baby. He is currently working as a volunteer under Organic Health Care Services Ethiopian Residents Charity, a sub-grantee of USAID Urban TB LON Activity.

He is originally from Silte Zone, Southern Ethiopia. After he completed his secondary school, he moved to Addis Ababa so that he can financially support his family through working as a daily laborer working for a year in marketplaces, in Addis Ababa, he was convinced by his friends that he would make more money with less effort if he went abroad, Saudi Arabia and he found his way out.

However, after Mukemil moved to Saudi Arabia, he faced the reverse scenario where his health started to deteriorate every day. Night sweating, high fever, joint pain, and lack of energy started to become his daily experience. He tried to seek solution visiting health facilities in Saudi, but they couldn't diagnose the case for two years. He failed to renew his visa and he was caught and spent a week in prison. He thought he felt better after getting back to Addis and started his work from where he left it from. However, after few months his health issue revived, and he was seriously sick. His body started to swell and loss consciousness and as people around suggested him, he went to religious places and

applied traditional medicines for the medical intervention didn't have the desired outcome. "There were so many days I said this is my final day," Mukemil said. Finally, he was admitted to hospital as he was not able to breathe and sleep. Then, the hospital took sputum in the hospital he was admitted, and he was diagnosed with MDR TB. After starting the treatment, his situation started improvement and was fully cured after treatment completion.



Mukemil said, he lost a lot of friends, money (over ETB 75,000) and faced psychological crises because of TB and he is a great enemy of the disease. He was happy to find the platform *to fighting back through volunteering* in the USAID Urban TB LON Activity.

*When Mukemil share his life testimony for the community*

*Photo credit Birhane Tadesse*

Mukemil is so passionate on finding missing people with TB thinking that if he was diagnosed earlier, he wouldn't have suffered to this level. He allocated regular time to do health education and screening in urban slum areas of Addis Ababa and within a quarter, he was able to reach 720 people and found 3 TB cases from 20 presumptive cases he identified.