



## SELAMAWIT BEKELE

Selamawit is a senior from San Jose, California majoring in Health and Societies with a concentration in Global Health. Her engagements are a manifestation of her interest in the intersection of public health and biomedicine. During her time at Penn, she has immersed herself in civic engagement by volunteering in a refugee clinic at Penn Center for Primary Care, leading the Penn chapter of QuestBridge Scholars to advocate for first-generation and/or low-income students in the Penn community, and partaking in demonstration-based physics lessons through an Academically Based Community Service course. She has also extended her global engagement by co-founding a non-profit organization Kids of Dakar (that is in transition to becoming Africa Leads), interning in Ethiopia at Mekdim Ethiopia National Association, implementing a health and hygiene project in Senegal (through the Kathryn W. Davis 100 Projects for Peace Award). Selamawit is a recipient of the President's Engagement Prize and will be spending next year in Senegal to carry out Project YVETA, or Youth for Vocational Education and Training in Agriculture, a vocational and literacy school that will benefit marginalized young boys.

## CAPSTONE PROJECT

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### IT'S A WRAP: COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL EXIT STRATEGIES AMONG NGOS THAT OPERATE IN MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

*Faculty Advisor:*

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After witnessing many non-profit organizations exit abruptly from the communities they serve, this study aims to add to discussions of how organizations can hold themselves accountable to their beneficiaries and employees in order to execute a proper and effective exit. Mekdim Ethiopia National Association, a non-profit organization funded by USAID that works on reducing new HIV infection rates among most at-risk populations, is used as a case study. By focusing on the impact of project exit on grassroots employees and beneficiary communities, the question of well-planned exit is expanded to include project sustainability as well as community impact. After interviewing various employees in different rungs of the organization and its strategic partner, I learned that budget allocation toward the end of a project is one on which not all parties reach a consensus. Such disjunction especially creates a power hierarchy among international nonprofit organizations that fund small local nonprofits. Therefore, nonprofit organizations need to create an internal standard of operations that provide support to their grassroots employees as they face loss of a job as a result of project exit. The financial and technical demand of executing a successful exit is much greater than most organizations allocate. Therefore, financial and technical project exit planning needs to take place in the early stages of project conceptions and negotiations.