

# Czech-UNDP Challenge Fund Final Report



**Project Title: Girl Community Center in Addis Abeba**

<b>Milestone number</b>		4
<b>Innovator</b>		Skate World Better z.s.
<b>Local Partner</b>		Megabi Skate
<b>Project Locations</b>		Ethiopia – Addis Abeba
<b>Start date – End Date</b>		December 2022 – December 2023
<b>Funding (total USD)</b>	<b>UNDP Award</b>	<b>Co-Funding</b>
\$56 610,00	40.000 USD	16.610 USD

## I. SUMMARY

*The executive summary is a concise brief on the progress towards the expected results during the reporting period. The section should include context and key developments of the project; progress against expected results; key challenges and risks faced in the implementation (and what has been done to mitigate them); lessons learned as appropriate; utilization update - mention the total project budget (as proposed in the application); report on cumulative utilization (indicating the % utilization in brackets) on utilization during the reporting period; key recommendations. Suggested length – 1 page maximum*

We have successfully completed the construction part of this project. Our approach to the entire development problematic is to help / intervene where we can with our expertise, but let the local communities develop through their own efforts. In other words, the construction phase presents the crucial part of our input for the successful run of the future activities, and we have just completed our work. In our last days we have focused on the regular establishment of the weekly schedule, and we helped put our experiences from other projects into action. The results of our construction work are greater than expected as we managed to use more land than initially planned. This will allow for an accommodation of more individuals within skateboarding lessons but also cultural events et cetera. Due to a great position of the jobsite and our hotel, we had the opportunity to work approximately ten to twelve hours a day and thus we managed to complete the project in a greater scale, and we also managed to decorate it appropriately. We had very little intention to visit anything but the jobsite thus we decided to dedicate all our time spent in the country to work and to interactions with the children and young adults who shall use and foster the skatepark in the future. We have created great and hopefully lifetime friendships and we have taught the older individuals a set of skills they can use in their future construction activities.

The greatest challenge to us was everything that has to do with finances. Paying by card is nearly not existing among the construction material vendors and withdrawing money presents a challenge on its own. Rarely ATM's dispose with a sufficient amount of money and on top of that the daily possession of high quantities of money in cash presents a constant danger. The usual complication with money transactions, money exchanges and the necessity of having all finances in cash poses a great challenge on top of an already physically and mentally hard project. For our work it is crucial to be perfectly prepared in order to be able to do the job in one month and any side complications that are not caused by immediate situations only end up in lower impact and worse results in the overall outcome. In order for every volunteer to be able to work at his/her full capacity everything shall be perfectly prepared, so that no time is wasted. Having only around a month to complete a project is a challenging timeframe. However, both visa requirements and the free time invested by the volunteers cannot exceed the above-mentioned period. It is a difficult task to find the balance in the number of volunteers who solely focus on the construction work and the organization team. As much as doing all accounting and management in one person is a difficult task to handle it proves to be the most feasible solution for achieving the greatest results for the value of finances invested. I shall elaborate on the topic of financial challenges further in section V.

This being said, I strongly believe that we have done a wonderful job in Ethiopia, I am proud of the results, the team untied under our organization, and we are forever grateful for having the chance to implement another project in Africa.

## II. BACKGROUND

*This section should provide a short introductory of the project, including an overview of the situation analysis, objectives and changes in the context/situation. It should be kept brief, expand only on key changes that might affect implementation. This part should include brief background of project and its rationale; context including linkage to other ongoing projects/programs; Project Approach, including Project Set up and management and coordination arrangements; listing of the main responsible parties. Suggested length - half a page maximum*

As mentioned a couple of times in previous reports, we have experiences from four different projects in three different countries around Africa, where we have had the chance to implement a similar project. Namely those countries are Mozambique, Zambia and Eswatini. In order not to repeat myself, I shall focus on the background of our partner Israel Dejene, who runs the long-established organization Megabi Skate. We always pay great attention to choosing a partner with whom we shall implement the project. As explained above, our philosophy is to provide our work and our skill which is very unique, but we never directly order our partner how should he/she run the activities. We have that philosophy for the respect to the local leaders and for the belief that it never brings any good if people of totally different origin and background dictate somebody how should things be done. We do those projects in a completely different geopolitical context where different way of living and different manners are applied. We originally had a different partner, but we have chosen not to continue with the partner as we felt that their focus has not fully matured. On the other side Megabi skate has been running their activities for decades and they would continue to do so even if it was not for us. On top of SWB there were other individuals and organizations from the professional background of skateboarding who have previously supported Megabi Skate and I assume there will be others in the future. We have completed our job, we have continuously discussed with Israel Dejene the way he shall work in the community, and we shared all our experiences, ideas, and opinions. We did not have to introduce Israel to the rest of our partners as he is already in touch with all of them except for Jason Martin from Eswatini. Conveniently Israel introduced us to a whole new spectre of individuals, mostly from Eastern Africa and the Sahel where our connections are very scarce. This project therefore has the potential to connect the circles between the sub-Saharan region of Africa and the Arabic / Sahel / Eastern Africa region. Namely this is the Kenyan, Sudanese, and Ugandan community. We have the honour to be part of their communication in a group chat and we can therefore share our experiences and contacts on other peers who like to support us as Skate World Better. Instead, I direct those peers to support the leaders / groups around Africa who dedicate their lives to community work. (Deliverable 6)



### III. MAIN ACTIVITIES AND KEY RESULTS

*This section should focus on results backed by evidence of achievements. Give an overall and clear sense of the 'before-and-after' of the project intervention. Describe and analyse activities but emphasis on linking them more solidly to expected results by also including references and evidencing how the total number of activities helped to reach the results within reporting period. Suggested length – 1-3 pages.*

We have successfully completed the construction of the skatepark facility about four days before the departure to the Czech Republic. The following days we have dedicated to interactions with the children who are already the participants of the Megabi skate programs and also with those who were attracted by our presence and decided to regularly visit the newly established skatepark. As for the construction itself we have delivered a high-quality professional project, with great materials that we were lucky enough to acquire on the Ethiopian market. On top of that we brought some of our own products that guarantee the best durability and good quality of the concrete and other elements in the park. We can easily claim that this may not be our biggest project by size, but it certainly our best project by quality. Having dedicated a lot of time solely to the work and decoration, we managed to create a safe, useful, and playful space where children can feel welcome and can develop their skills and knowledge. Apart from the obvious concrete structures we painted the fragile edges with a specialized epoxy paint coloured to yellow, as yellow is one of the Ethiopian national colours. We planted two palm trees and a couple of flowers to bring a little bit of nature to the concrete jungle and we put together a mosaic bearing the logo / symbol of the Megabi Skate organization. (Megabi – meaning “life nourishment” in Amharic, local language)

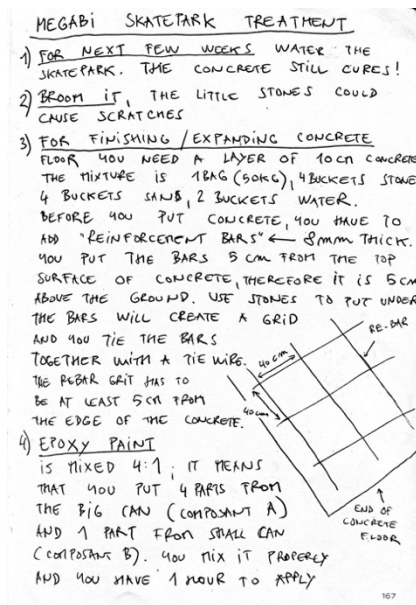


Where before there was a land full of stones and garbage now stands a useful playground. The entire layout allows for skateboarding in multiple areas and so multiple advanced individuals, or multiple beginner groups can use the space independently on each other. This will allow for the play of the youngest and the actual skateboarding of the older, or also for the session of the girls and the session of the boys - at the same time. As seen on the pictures bellow, the entire property is surrounded by walls and is therefore hidden from the outside world. The walls themselves create a natural space for art, screening or even lectures where chalk is used for writing / drawing / calculating on a provisional blackboard. On top of that the central obstacle

created a patio for speakers / singers and the entire rest of the playground is laid out around this central piece. This allows for perfect view on one elevated spot from the entire skatepark. Furthermore, the entire property has a running water and access to electricity which we brought from the neighbouring property. Water naturally allows for refreshing in the hot summer days and electricity allows for speakers, projectors, and other technology to be connected. We positioned four 100W lights on the walls which is just enough for the property to be fully in light at night. There is therefore no limit to using the space during the day.



To further elaborate on the construction plan, among our key objectives is not only to build those projects for the African youth that does not dispose neither with the skill, or the money for such a build, but also to share our know-how and learn the older boys and girls about construction principles and methods. We had a wonderful team of about seven consistent workers who were with us at the site every day. They did the difficult labour of mixing concrete, but we also paid close attention to teaching them our craft. The immediate plan of Megabi skate is to continue with the construction and expand the space over a last strip of land that we decided to leave for them to finish as a means of apprenticeship. I strongly believe they will do a wonderful job even without our physical presence. We shall remain in close contact and give further guidance where needed; however we are determined that we fostered a new elite of Ethiopian Skatepark builders.



Further construction plans and maintenance instructions.

Our professional builder Jakub Šimůnek explaining the methods.

At the time of our departure, the skatepark facility is fully completed and open to public. We have furthermore handed over not only skateboarding equipment and shoes for the daily loaner programs, but also a couple of concrete tools that we brought and building tools that we purchased in Addis Abeba. With relation to the section above, we did so in order to secure a continuous thrive of Megabi skate not only as an organization fostering healthy development of children, but also fostering new skilled sportsmen and sportswomen and skilful concrete workers / skatepark builders.

The facility is in the central of a semi-rural suburban setting is naturally used by community leaders to a set of activities. The key activity is organized by Israel Dejene himself, who does extra-curricular education on traditional crafts such as handloom and pottery. Naturally, skateboarding lessons are divided throughout the week into lessons for young kids, lessons for older kids and free skateboarding for advanced visitors from all over the town / all over the world. This schedule is yet to be altered until perfectly settled. Skilled riders who are the very same men who were our concrete work apprentices are taking care of the older kids, while Israel himself encourages the youngest kids to overcome their fears and worries through

skateboarding and movement. A female side of the organization has also been established, not as long ago, focusing only on girls and young women. The leader of the community is Muluken Dejene, who focuses likewise on skateboarding activities but also dance and singing. We were able to witness an amazing performance at the opening ceremony, after cutting the ribbon. As originally planned the centre is currently hosting a safe space for men but also women who can use the space as their community centre. Where their activities are divided in certain days and certain hours, it also comes to an interaction between the male and female fractions of the organization which helps create a healthy relationship between not only people of different ages and religions, but most importantly genders – which continues to be an ongoing issue in Ethiopia and perhaps Eastern Africa in general.



*The morning after completion of the concrete work.*



*The ceremony at the opening.*



*Megabi skate leaders.*



*Megabi skate children.*





*Opening celebration.*



*Opening celebration at the evening hours.*

#### IV. PARTNERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

*Briefly describe all partnerships, including new ones built in the course of the reporting period. Report on the major impact that these partnerships have on results. How stakeholders, counterparts and/or local communities are/were engaged in implementation of the project to ensure sustainability of the project.*

*Suggested length – half a page*

The key partnership that has been fostered and shall further be fostered is the one created with Israel Dejene and the entire Megabi Skate group. It has not been mentioned before that Israel stands as a leader of the group, however he is followed by around ten other adults who run the programs for the children aged between two to fifteen years old. I strongly believe that we have created a strong bond not only with Israel himself but also with the other followers who shall perhaps one day take a lead in similar projects or simply expand Megabi Skate into a much greater organization. Naturally we have engaged the entire community in the construction of the project. Local men were mixing the concrete for us, and local women were helping with easier tasks and cooking the lunch for us. This three week long scheme created an idea of appreciation among the entire local community and I strongly believe that everybody from the neighbourhood will further take care of the space and will pay close attention to the activities carried out.

It is important to mention that we have not stopped the communication with our previous partner Ethiopia Girl skate. We have donated a couple of concrete tools and we have also donated a couple of skateboards so that they can further improve their activities. In the future we shall further help create a closer bond between the two organizations under the idea that unions are always stronger, which is after all the very idea of our projects.



*Our team with some of the local apprentices.*

## V. KEY CHALLENGES LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMENDATIONS

*Mention key challenges encountered during implementation period and lessons learned as well as the way forward. For each of them, describe successful approaches taken to address challenges and highlight recommendations for future consideration in implementing the Project. This should include any modifications that needed or need to be made to proposed targets as well data collection and monitoring to track progress. Suggested length –1 page*

The hardest challenge to the project in Ethiopia was financial complication, that can be subcategorized into four separate but at the same time connected points. All those points are common to the construction-development projects around Africa but perhaps in the case of Ethiopia those financial difficulties presented a greater challenge than usually.

For 1) it is fairly difficult for us to cover the cashflow of such projects. As an NGO we cannot generate any money except for little amounts collected through selling our merchandise, however we are left with no option but to spend most of the money in a short period of time when we buy all the construction materials. Our projects always entail the necessity to take loans from friends or financial institutions to be able to pay for all materials and logistics. Doing this on top of the physical work, management, accounting, and reporting is a rather difficult task, which always presents the biggest challenge to us. For the cashflow difficulties we are left with less focus on the actual work in which we have profound expertise and which only two other NGO's worldwide offer.

For 2) it is extremely complicated to have the local currency exchanged for dollars as even banks struggle with financial transactions between Europe and Africa and withdrawing all the money from ATM's would virtually be impossible (on top of the danger posed on an individual in possession of so many bank notes on public). Fortunately we managed to contact numerous Ethiopian nationals residing in Europe beforehand and they connected us to their local friends, or partners. We were able to exchange money through individuals who also in occasions bought material for us. This had a double meaning as local people capable of speaking local language and knowing the local customs can always get a better price. Europeans are commonly seen as eternally rich, thus it is very easy to get scammed. Getting a higher prices on construction material ordered in high quantities could easily mount up to greater sums.

And for 3) most of the transactions, even in the capital city, are based on a hand to hand, cash payments, but acquiring the money in cash often takes hours or very complicated financial exchanges, where usually multiple credit cards and accounts are required. On top of that, European banks often monitor transactions made in Africa and may sometimes investigate or even block certain transactions. Having an experience with the low compatibility between European and African monetary systems we always organize a meeting with our bank before embarking on a project in order to prevent from any complications.

For the future projects we shall abide by the same empirical rules and steps in order to secure a steady financial flow, but perhaps we shall focus on financial sources that can be at disposal in full amount to us before starting a project. This can be done by many ways, including crowdfundings, operating loans with nearly zero interest rate for NGO's or a private financing.

## VI. MEDIA COVERAGE AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

*(Please summarize the media coverage and public outreach; include links to relevant articles and media)*

In time of writing this report we have not released nothing but a regular update about our activities on the social media. All our peers from the skateboarding world and also from the background focusing on the work in Africa are well aware of our current activities in Ethiopia. However, we are in a regular touch with the media who follow our projects, and we shall put out a couple of articles and interviews once all the photos and videos collected are put together and are well organized. To mention the expected coverage, we will have an article in a Czech skateboard magazine "Boardmag.cz", an interview in a Czech skateboard podcast called "Switch", further an article in "Seznam zprávy", "Esquire magazine", and also in a French magazine focusing on social projects called "Forever Playground". Among the more important ones we are discussing an invitation to DTV and we are also expecting a great outreach through a well-known and well established Slovak photographer Kubo Krížo, who is here with us volunteering in concrete work while documenting the entire process and local life and activities. His photographs are to be seen in this report and under [this link](#). The photos from the opening day are to be found under [this link](#). We further plan an exhibition of photographs from the four projects carried out with SWB and therefore Ethiopia and also Zambia, supported by Czech-UNDP partnership shall be among them.

## VII. PROJECT'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

*Please attach original budget sheet and add report current utilization of budget to the email.*

## VIII. DELIVERABLES AND ANNEXES

*Please include (attach to the email or share via online storage) deliverables listed in the Contract.*

*Please include any additional information such as articles, leaflets, publications, reports and drafts of studies developed during the project implementation.*

*Please include up to 3 photos relevant to the project implementation relevant for the current milestone.*

## IX. CHECKLIST

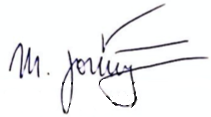
- Deliverables described in the Contract included/attached*
- Photos attached*
- Budget sheet attached*
- Invoice attached*

**PREPARED BY:**

**Date:** 21.12.

**Name of the responsible person:** Martin Loužecký

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Loužek" with a stylized flourish at the end.