

**INDIVIDUAL CASE STORY | MSE SYSTEM**

**INCREASING FINANCIAL AND TIME WEALTH FOR WOMEN THROUGH OUTSOURCING: YESHIHAREG'S STORY**

**“THE BENEFIT FROM THIS JOB OPPORTUNITY IS NOT ONLY ABOUT INCREASED INCOME, BUT THE TIME FREEDOM IT GIVES ME.”**

Women in Ethiopia are affected by time poverty due to prevailing social norms that result in unequal gender-based classification of roles and responsibilities. The disproportionate unpaid care workload of women combined with other unpaid responsibilities, which are routine, time intensive, and have low rewards, leave them with scarce excess time. This is associated with low focus on and motivation for personal development, an inability to pursue better opportunities, as well as limited practice with and confidence in making autonomous life choices. As a result, many women remain socially vulnerable and economically dependent.

LIWAY partnered with Muday Association to pilot an intervention that aims to provide a solution for young and adult women who are struggling to secure ‘decent’ jobs with better income, based on their available time. The intervention, which involves outsourced production of enjera under the Muday Enjera brand, not only helps women who are seeking work, but also helps those with established businesses expand their market reach through outsourced production with set quality standards.



Twenty-two-year-old Yeshihareg is among the young women who have accessed the employment opportunity to produce enjera with support from the Muday Association, including access to shared workspace, technical and business training, and access to quality inputs including pre-financing. She has been a member of the ‘Meseret’ enjera producing group for eight months. They supply agreed quantities of their product to Muday based on pre-determined prices.

Before learning about the outsourced enjera production opportunity, Yeshihareg tried to earn income in different ways, but her opportunities were limited, and she was only educated up to grade six due to financial difficulties in her family. She grew up in a rural area of Ethiopia but moved to Addis Ababa to work as a housemaid because, as the first-born child in her family, she shouldered the burden of providing financial support for her parents and younger siblings. However, after four years working as a housemaid, she decided to return to her home and try her hand at her own business.

Yeshihareg explains:

“ I’ve been working as a housemaid for four years to support my family. But a year ago, I quit my job as a housemaid and returned to my hometown to start a business with the money I had saved. I started a poultry business, but unfortunately all of the chickens died. ”

Determined to not give up, Yeshihareg returned to Addis Ababa, where she found full-time work in a textile factory for a monthly salary of 1,500 ETB and lived in a rented house with other young women. After working in the factory for five months, she learned about the outsourced enjera production opportunity from a friend and decided to see if she could participate. She explains:

“ I heard about this job opportunity from a friend and went to the kebele to get registered. Fortunately, I was chosen, and I received training on enjera production and began working with other women in this group. ”

Yeshihareg works three and a half days a week in her group in a workspace they share with another similar group, each of which does half day shifts. She now earns more than her previous jobs and works fewer days. She explains with a pleasant smile on her face:

“ Compared to my previous jobs, I am earning more money and have more free time as well. Previously, I was pressed for time to visit my family and even to think calmly about my future. But this job has given me enough free time to try other income generating opportunities and also to pay visits to my family and friends, which I could not do in months. ”

Yeshihareg is a visionary young lady who works tirelessly to make the most of all opportunities on her life’s path. She now also engages in a coffee making business in the free time she has when she is not working on her enjera business. She earns additional income of 3,000 ETB per month from her coffee making business. While she is now able to provide more financial support to her family, she is quick to point out her increased time wealth and its importance to her. She explains:

“ I am now able to support my family. I send some amount of money every month to my sister who is attending school in a town far from family... For me, the benefit from this job opportunity is not only about increased income, but the time freedom it gives me is unique from my former jobs. Now I have time that I can decide on. As a result, I am feeling happy and free to make choices about what I want to do and when, and how to improve my life. ”

Yeshihareg is now aspiring to grow her business and is working on expanding her coffee business by offering food products and services that will further increase her income.