

**INTERVENTION BRIEF | MLE SYSTEM**

# WASTEPAPER RECYCLING TO CREATE INCOMES FOR WOMEN & YOUTH

## THE PROBLEM

Ethiopia consumes 300,000 tons of paper per year, of which only 5% is recycled. Currently, there are six paper-recycling companies – all with medium and large-scale capacity – that are working to mitigate the high cost of importing virgin paper (plus related forex challenges of importing), as well as to contribute to environmental sustainability. Currently, these paper recycling companies are operating at 30% of their installed production capacity. The economic potential of developing this sector has not been fully realised due to lack of management capacity of collectors (financial, technical, and human resources), lack of coordination between the municipality and other key stakeholders (e.g., NGOs, communities), lack of private sector involvement and investment, and lack of reliable/consistent supply of wastepaper, which is the key input for recycling companies.



## OUR INTERVENTION

LIWAY partnered with Addis Ababa Solid Waste Management Agency (AASWMA) and private recycling companies and dealers to create a more efficient wastepaper collection system that increases quantity and quality of input supply, as well as increases incomes of poor women and youth who work as wastepaper collectors.



The model involves expansion of existing paper collection services to include more office building participation, increased collection locations, and development of an agent network. It also includes systemic market linkages between wastepaper collectors, transporters, and recycling companies, with payments based on transparent contractual agreements among the market actors to ensure no actor benefits at the expense or exclusion of another. Wastepaper collectors receive training on technical skills needed to meet required product quality, such as how to remove waste and debris, how to efficiently handle and organise the wastepaper, and how to manage finances and marketing. This enables increased incomes for collectors, which are based on the volume collected and the quality of the wastepaper.

AASWMA recruits women and youth as wastepaper collectors and delivers the training, as well as organises sites for wastepaper collection and provides other required facilities needed by collectors. LIWAY provided initial financial support to diagnose the market distortions, facilitated communication among market actors, and shared costs to test and demonstrate the model.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- Concept note developed and approved by Sida.
- Partnership agreement signed with Addis Ababa Solid Waste Management Agency.
- Market linkages and good working relationships developed between Addis Ababa Solid Waste Management Agency, paper recycling companies, and wastepaper collectors.
- 1,200 employment opportunities created for women and youth.

EMPLOYMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES CREATED  
FOR WOMEN & YOUTH

1,200



The new model has the potential to increase Addis Ababa's percentage of recyclable waste captured from an estimated 10–20% to 70%, as well as scale to include additional actors and other sub-cities and woredas, thus increasing incomes of more women and youth.

The Livelihoods Improvement for Women and Youth (LIWAY) programme aims to increase incomes of poor women and youth in Addis Ababa through improved wage and self-employment opportunities. We work in four interrelated market systems to create sustainable change: labour, micro and small enterprise (MSE), medium and large enterprise (MLE), and skills. LIWAY is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and is implemented by a consortium of partners composed of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, Mercy Corps, TechnoServe, and Save the Children International.

**For more information, visit: [www.liway.org](http://www.liway.org)**