

INDIVIDUAL CASE STORY | LABOUR SYSTEM

## A NEW JOB FAIR FACILITATES HEBRON'S JOURNEY FROM COLLEGE TO CAREER

In 2021, 22-year-old Hebron graduated from Admas University with a bachelor's degree in accounting and an expectation of securing employment. But finding a job turned out to be harder than she thought. Despite using several online channels such as Telegram, Facebook, and Ethiojobs, Hebron remained unemployed. Combined with societal pressure to secure a job as a university graduate, her lack of success began to impact her psychologically. She believed in the value of online job sites but didn't know what else she could do to increase her chances of becoming employed.



Hebron participating in the job fair learning workshop

Hebron then heard about a new job fair event, which she thought was organised and attended only by job matching agents. She decided to participate hoping it might connect her with new opportunities, and found the event was much more than she expected. The job fair was a pilot event facilitated by LIWAY in partnership with Mela Events Management, Aha Psychological Services PLC, and the Bureau of Labour, Enterprise, and Industrial Development (BoLEID). The aim was to test a job fair event for low and semi-skilled job seekers that brings together a pool of job seekers and employers for in-person exchange, as well as develops job seekers through job search soft skills training and job readiness testing. The event was free to attend for job seekers and, due to the economic impact of COVID-19, employer fees (e.g., for booth rental) were waived for the pilot event and costs were shared by LIWAY and the implementing partners.

Through the job fair event, Hebron was able to meet several employers from different industries. As she explains:

*"The job fair gave me an opportunity to meet multiple employers at a time. It is accessible for many job seekers like me who are trying to get the right employer in their profession."*

Hebron also participated in the training and job readiness testing that was offered, which helped her spotlight strengths and areas of improvement she was not previously aware of. This helped her in her discussions with recruiters and to eventually secure a job. She explains:

*"After submitting a lot of applications, I received a call from a recruiter on the second day after the event who had a role in sales. We discussed all the relevant things: my degree, strengths, weaknesses, etc. Then I got a call for an offer. I was happy when I finally got a job. It was a really nice day indeed."*

Hebron secured a job as a call centre agent at one of Ethiopia’s leading mobile payment companies called Ebirr. She is now earning a monthly salary of 4,000 ETB and has plans to develop her work experience and continue to look for opportunities to use her education in accounting. She is thankful for the job fair and believes more of these events are needed to help others like her. She explains:

*“I felt it was a great opportunity to meet face to face with potential employers. Everything was great. Thanks for letting me be a part of the fair. However, organising a job fair once a year won’t solve the highest unemployment rate of Addis. Organisers must consider organising frequent job fairs to help connect job seekers with potential employers. In addition, virtual job fairs will help connect job seekers with businesses that have immediate hiring needs.”*

The pilot job fair, held for two days in January 2021, was attended by 3,315 job seekers and 32 employers. 959 job seekers were matched with jobs, 453 of which were female. Based on the success of the event and positive feedback from participants, including employers, employment agencies, and job matching service providers, further job fairs and post-event digital job matching services are being planned based on sponsorship and employer fee-based models. Ongoing events and complementary digital services will help realise Hebron’s vision of connecting greater numbers of job seekers and employers and enable more young people like herself to secure employment.