

## INDIVIDUAL CASE STORY | LABOUR SYSTEM

# A NEW CHILDCARE MODEL BRINGS HOPE TO LOW-INCOME WOMEN

### “IT’S HARD. WORKING AND RAISING A KID ALONE IS REALLY HARD.”

Those are the words of Tiruye, a 27-year-old single mom. Her husband had been the main income earner in the home, but following their divorce, Tiruye realised she had to work to help support herself and her two-year-old son. She was able to get a job as a waitress at a small café, but she then had to figure out who could care for her son while she worked. At times she was able to leave him at a neighbour’s home, but this made her uncomfortable. She didn’t like having to constantly ask for favours and she could never be fully confident about the safety of her son.



Tiruye tried to find a childcare service she could afford but was discouraged by lack of availability and the experiences of others. Finding affordable childcare in the city quickly became the biggest stress in Tiruye’s life. That was, until she heard about the affordable childcare service at the Dagmawi Menelik Primary School from someone in her community. Many childcare services in public institutions are only available to employees, but she was hopeful, and enquired as to whether she was able to register for the service. Tiruye was elated to learn that it was open to members of the community, “I didn’t believe it when I first heard about it because so many of my friends told me that finding affordable childcare is so difficult.”

The affordable childcare service is a market-based intervention developed in partnership between LIWAY and several public institutions, including Dagmawi Menelik Primary School. The opportunity for the intervention was identified through LIWAY’s assessment of how the labour market system disadvantages or excludes poor women and youth. The assessment highlighted a lack of pro-poor childcare services, which constrains low-income women from participating in the workforce. Childcare services in public institutions primarily cater to employees. Although they have sufficient operational space to service the broader community, they lack key facilities, as well as the ability to fully cover nanny fees due to provision of free services to employees. This was the case with Dagmawi Menelik Primary School.

