

INTERVENTION CASE STORY | [SKILLS SYSTEM](#)

DEVELOPING SKILLS TO ENABLE FOOD AND BEVERAGE FIRMS TO SUCCESSFULLY PIVOT IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

IMPROVING QUALITY OF SANITISERS AND ALCOHOL PRODUCTS

The food and beverage industry in Ethiopia was hit hard during COVID-19. Hotels, restaurants, and bars were either closed or not operating as usual and there was limited opportunity to increase sales through online channels due to the country's nascent ecommerce sector. The possibility of prolonged impact leading to staff reductions was a significant concern, particularly with regards to LIWAY's primary target groups of poor women and youth.



Some food and beverage firms responded by diversifying their product range to include products in high demand due to COVID-19, in particular sanitisers and alcohol products for cleaning/disinfecting. However, most firms were not producing these products according to WHO recommended standards because of gaps in skills and experience. This led to the shutdown of several businesses by concerned government bodies.

LIWAY recognised the need to bridge the skills and experience gaps to ultimately enable firms to retain employees from its target group, as well as enable new microenterprises to emerge to meet demand with quality products that adhere to WHO standards. LIWAY partnered with the Food, Beverage, and Pharmaceutical Industry Development Institute (FBPIDI) to create and implement a skills development intervention.

As part of the intervention, target industries and existing and potential microenterprises were identified, and an assessment was conducted of their gaps with respect to the production of sanitiser and alcohol products. FBPIDI established a partnership with Addis Ababa University's College of Health Science, School of Pharmacy, and Department of Pharmaceuticals & Social Pharmacy to develop training materials and deliver training-of-trainer (ToT) sessions to experts that had been identified within the target firms, as well as FBPIDI experts and other relevant professionals. The training was cascaded through the firms by the trained trainers, who also provided on-the-job technical assistance, with support from FBPIDI. FBPIDI also supplied basic equipment needed to test product quality. LIWAY shared the costs to enable the intervention and provided technical support (e.g. work plan development and management, identification of solutions for challenges) and capacity building (e.g. reporting, partnering), as well as organised workshops for partners to share experiences and success stories.

To date 107 industry experts have been trained as trainers from 41 firms in addition to experts from FBPIDI and the Addis Ababa Bureau of Industry. Employment has been retained or created for 734 of LIWAY's target beneficiaries, which includes 249 female youth, 339 male youth, and 146 adult women. The intervention has also contributed to COVID-19 prevention through increased availability of quality sanitiser and alcohol products.



A SILVER LINING FOR BAYUSH AND WOMEN & YOUTH

Bayush Alcoholic Drinks Factory is one of the firms that benefitted from LIWAY's skills development intervention in response to COVID-19. Established in 2018 and based in Addis Ababa, Bayush employed 26 people (13 male, 13 female) to produce different types of alcoholic beverages. Prior to COVID-19 the firm's products were selling well and they were earning good profits. However, when COVID-19 hit, Bayush experienced a significant drop in product sales due to the closure or reduced operation of hotels, restaurants, and bars.

Management was concerned about the potential need for staff reductions and the livelihoods of its employees and realised they may be able to retain staff by diversifying into the production of sanitisers and alcohol products for cleaning/disinfecting. They began producing the products, but due to skills and experience gaps, their products did not adhere to the WHO recommended standards.

How Bayush Alcoholic Drinks Factory benefitted from the intervention:

- Improved production capacity
- Market expansion
- Ability to retain existing employees
- Creation of new jobs for 15 women & youth



Fortunately, the firm's management team learned of LIWAY's intervention to develop skills to produce the correct product quality. Two experts from Bayush participated in the ToT sessions and then cascaded the training to all Bayush employees. Following training, the firm was able to identify and use quality raw materials, production procedures, and labelling to produce products that meet WHO standards. As a result, Bayush was able to improve its production capacity, expand its market, and retain existing employees. They were also able to create new jobs for an additional 15 women and youth who earn an average monthly salary of 2,125 ETB. LIWAY's intervention has therefore created a silver lining to the COVID-19 cloud, not only for Bayush, but also for poor women and youth who were able to either keep or gain employment.