

INTERVENTION BRIEF | MSE SYSTEM

ACCESS TO INFORMATION FOR MICRO & SMALL ENTERPRISES

THE PROBLEM

Information is the power that brings market opportunities. Lack of tailored and segmented market information hinders businesses' day-to-day operation and growth. For MSEs, access to information is a critical challenge both to start and expand their businesses. While some information platforms exist, they are not suited to the needs of MSEs. As a result, MSEs are largely dependent on family and social networks as sources of information, in addition to the less efficient government systems.



OUR INTERVENTION

LIWAY partnered with private service provider eBiz Online Solutions PLC to improve MSE access to information to enable business start-up and growth. The intervention includes an online information portal called KEFTA (meaning growth in Amharic), which is complemented with a call centre.



MSEs pay an affordable subscription fee to access the platform, which includes a business directory and information such as rules and regulations on MSE establishment, tax regulations, entrepreneurship skills, construction bids, input prices, business information (Business-to-Government, Business-to-Business, Business-to-Consumer, bazaars, events and promotion), and access to financial services (financing opportunities and microfinance institutions). Tailored business information alerts are provided via SMS, and MSEs have access to a call centre to respond to questions about the information on the portal. Technical training is also included to improve awareness and information seeking behaviours of women and youth. In addition, there is information filtering and feedback loops to ensure quality assurance and measure success rates.

Based on existing experience with information portals, eBiz developed the information portal tailored for the MSE market, which includes identifying, filtering, aggregating, and delivering relevant information for the target groups. eBiz runs and promotes the online portal and has a business incentive to sustain and scale the service. LIWAY co-created the business model, shared costs to pilot the service, and provided technical assistance and information about MSE needs.



The intervention aims to benefit up to 6,000 women and youth owned MSEs in Addis Ababa by enabling them to increase earnings through improved access to useful business-related information.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- Developed the KEFTA information platform and integrated other business portals (Megbia), as well as setup the call centre and SMS capability.
- KEFTA portal users increased 85% between 2020 and 2021 to reach 15,889 users, which includes 4,010 women and youth owned MSEs.

**GROWTH IN KEFTA
PORTAL USERS
2020 - 2021**

85%

**# OF WOMEN AND
YOUTH OWNED MSEs
WITH GREATER EARNING
POTENTIAL THROUGH
ACCESS TO
INFORMATION**

4,010

- MSE subscribers get access to relevant, updated information daily, including business opportunities such as secured bids.
- Improved access to information has supported MSEs in developing their business profiles for Business-to-Consumer; increased opportunities based on MSE profiles listed on KEFTA have been reported.
- Ongoing promotion and marketing of the information portal using various channels (e.g., Telegram, Facebook, FM radio, 116 billboards at different woredas).
- Training provided to 649 women and youth owned MSEs.

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