

INDIVIDUAL CASE STORY | MSE SYSTEM

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP BAZAAR ENHANCES VISIBILITY AND UNLEASHES THE POTENTIAL OF ENTREPRENEURS LIKE RAHEL

Lack of operational space, market visibility, and market information are critical constraints affecting the performance and growth of women and youth-owned micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in Ethiopia. Government-organised bazaars occur three times a year following major holidays and tend to be poorly located, organised, and publicised. Moreover, bazaars organised by private actors exclude MSEs as the fees to participate are very high. MSEs, therefore, lack access to appropriate and affordable retail space, which combined with cost-prohibitive production space, limits their ability to produce and promote their products and ultimately to grow their businesses.

To address the constraints, LIWAY is implementing the improved Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Bazaar intervention in partnership with private event organiser, Ashengo Events and Design plc and Addis Ababa Bureau of Labour, Enterprises, and Industrial Development (BoLEID). The PPP Bazaar is inclusive of women and youth owned MSEs and is innovative in terms of services provided before and during the event (e.g., training). It is also regularly conducted, affordable for MSEs, and sustainable through joint efforts between private and public service providers. The intervention is estimated to increase incomes for 5,994 poor women and youth in Addis Ababa.

Rahel is one of the women benefitting from the new PPP Bazaar intervention. Rahel owns a home furnishing crafts enterprise called Tuba Crafts, which she started based on her love of traditional/cultural goods and her personal experience as a consumer with lack of availability, poor quality, and high prices. As she explained:

“ My observation of the shortcomings of the cultural goods I used to crave has become my source of inspiration to start my own business. ”



Rahel started her company in 2019 with one employee in her family compound. Although she lacked experience producing traditional home furnishing crafts, she was able to learn the skills she needed with the help of her employee, an expert weaver, as well as through practice, and reading about how to weave the fabrics. She produces several goods that portray different cultures and traditions through images, scripts, figures, and alphabets, which form an integral part of her product designs. Her products include items such as table runners, cushions, and wall and floor mats.

Rahel sources inputs directly from producers and creates products in her own compound, saving her a minimum of 50,000 ETB per month that she would otherwise have to spend on production space. She initially sold her products through her own network because she did not have retail space and there was a lack of known market outlets. That was until a personal contact told her about the Yenegewu Bazaar organised by Ashengo and held every month at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Addis Ababa. Rahel registered for the Bazaar and participated in the training, which includes topics such as goal setting, defining your business, brand, packaging and presentation, and marketing and sales. Her first experience with the Bazaar was a big success and she has continued to participate and benefit from the Yenegewu Bazaar as well as others. She explained:

“ I took training organised by Ashengo before attending the event. Then, I participated in the third bazaar and sold 20,000 ETB in one day, which is equivalent to my average monthly sales, and I have got many permanent buyers that continue ordering from me after the bazaar. Yenegewu Bazaar was my first bazaar experience. Recognising the value, I joined the 12th round and continued attending a couple of selected bazaars organised by others. I got local buyers who have become my regular customers and international buyers and exporters from the Bazaar. My sales have almost doubled due to the new links I got, and I gained some promises of exporting my products. The pre-bazaar training also helped me in brand building, customer handling, and displaying and presenting products to attract bazaar visitors. Customer feedback also helped me to innovate and diversify my products. ”

With the growth of her business and the addition of new customers and markets, Rahel has created employment opportunities for 14 young employees, 10 of whom are female. She envisions further expansion of her business, including the addition of more employees, and she has recently opened a showroom to showcase her products. She is appreciative of her husband's support of her plans. Not only has he agreed with her idea of allocating household income as working capital for the business, but he has also agreed to her using all the earnings to re-invest into the business to support its expansion and he supports her in decision-making and with challenges that arise.