

INDIVIDUAL CASE STORY | SKILLS SYSTEM

UPSKILLING WOMEN IN CRAFTWORK TO MEET MARKET DEMANDS AND INCREASE INCOMES

Ensira Pottery Producers Association was established in 2019 with 300 women pottery producers. The Association received support from the Addis Ababa City Administration in the form of space for their activities, which included large production and processing rooms, storage facilities, showrooms, offices, and daycare rooms. However, despite the space accommodating their various needs, the women were unable to optimise it due to skills gaps, which limited them from meeting the quality and quantity demanded in the market.

As part of an intervention to improve the incomes of women and youth through upskilling and re-skilling handicraft producers, women in Ensira Association received training on pottery product design and diversification.

The intervention, referred to as Enhanced Handcraft Skills for Livelihoods Improvement of Women and Youth (EHs4LIWAY), was implemented by LIWAY in partnership with Ethiopian Tourism Trading Enterprise (ETTE). The aim is to provide women and youth handicraft producers with training that aligns with market demand and therefore enables them to generate greater incomes. ETTE delivers the training. They also equipped their staff to provide continuous support and are establishing a centre of excellence for handicrafts. LIWAY co-created the business model, provided technical support, and shared the training costs to pilot the model.

Enat is one of the members of Ensira Association who benefitted from the intervention. She explains how the training helped her expand her product range and increase her revenue.

“ Before the training, I used to make only two kinds of pottery, a small charcoal stove and a flower vase. But after I got the skills from the training, I have learned to make different shapes of pottery and now I produce more than ten kinds of different shapes and sizes of pottery products. As my product types increase, I am getting more customers. Now there are many customers who want my products, and as a result, I sell more, and my income has increased from 3,000 ETB per month to 6,000 per month... I want to learn more to develop my skill and produce unique pots with my own brand. ”



Similar to Enat, the training enabled Lawgalet to diversify her products to meet market demand and earn more consistent and greater income. Lawgalet explains:

“ Before I had the chance to receive the training, I made only coffee pots, and even those were of somehow low quality and few in number. I had a very low income and found it difficult to pay even the most basic expenses. I had to ask every time from my husband for some personal expenses. But, because of the training, I have mastered how to create pots with various designs and have begun to attract new markets and make significantly more money than before... The training completely changed my view; it opened my eyes and helped me utilise my expertise to the maximum. Just improving my skills is helping me earn better income. ”

Since her income has significantly increased, Lawgalet is now about to purchase inputs for her pottery work in advance, cover her household and personal expenses, and start saving 1,000 ETB every month.

Enat and Lawgalet are just a couple examples of the many women from Ensira Association who have been able to improve their skills and increase their incomes through the upskilling training. The number of women benefitting continues to increase as the Association has started transferring skills to non-member pottery makers for a fee. Additionally, based on requests from different development organisations and government sectors, selected members of the Association are also providing fee-based training of trainers (ToT) to people in different regions across Ethiopia.