

“I aspire to be one of the top leather products exporters in Ethiopia.”

Lidiya Ayalew

Leather products manufacturing company owner who obtained a loan from the Addis Credit and Saving Institution (ADCSI), a Microfinance Institution supported by the EP-Women Entrepreneurship Development Project (WEDP).

The loan helped her to purchase more raw materials for her business to expand. Lidiya has now increased her staff from 2 to 18 employees.

EP-WEDP provides technical assistance (TA) to 12 partner MFIs to better serve the financial needs of Micro and Small Enterprises owned fully, or partially by women entrepreneurs.



Lidiya Ayalew is the owner of a leather manufacturing company located in the Lem-Hotel neighbourhood of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Before starting her company, Lidiya first acquired her leather production technical skills by participating in trainings given by the Ethiopian Leather Industry Development Institute (LIDI). Upon completing the training, she was employed by a leather manufacturing company where she gained experience and further interest in the leather industry.

However, she had a vision of a better future. That vision, is what motivated her to start her own business in July 2013. She began in her home, using one sewing machine, and employing two people. During her initial stage, Lidiya was able to produce 12 leather jackets, and 10 leather bags per month using the 500 square feet of leather hides she purchased.

As the demand for her products grew, she sought to increase her production capacity but found working capital to be a challenge. Consequently, she wanted to take a loan, but believed that to obtain a loan only tangible assets (for example – a house) could be used as collateral. Due to this, Lidiya feared she would not be able to obtain a loan.¹ Fortunately, she received information from Addis Credit and Saving Institution (ADCSI) telling her that she could use salary as an alternative collateral option. Hearing this, she requested a WEDP loan of 50,000 Birr using salary as collateral, and received the loan in May 2015. Lidiya used the loan for purchasing raw materials, and continued to see growing demand for her products. As a result, she obtained a second WEDP loan of 100,000 Birr in December 2016 from ADCSI.

Presently, Lidiya has four sewing machines, and 18 full-time staff. She is now able to purchase 2,500 square feet of leather hides, while producing 148 leather jackets, 80 leather bags, and 51 leather belts per month.

Lidiya’s dream is to become one of the top leather products exporters in Ethiopia. She knows this will not be achieved easily, but believes that with her determination, hard work, and the support of her family, she will achieve her goals.

¹ In Ethiopia, women have little or no control over household assets to pledge as collateral. Because of the TA, different collateral options other than houses were explored by WEDP partner MFIs.

