

the
Singapore

WAY

USE CASE

From Learning to Earning

From Learning to Earning: A Women's Skills Network Inspired by SkillsFuture

1. Context Snapshot – A Captivating Story

- City Name: Asmara
- Country: Eritrea
- Population: 835,000
- Year of Launch: 2023

In the bustling neighborhoods of Asmara, women were everywhere—managing food stalls, sewing in sunlit courtyards, teaching children, coding quietly in cyber cafes. Yet, they were largely invisible in the formal economy. Vocational training was outdated. Digital literacy was low. Lifelong learning, especially for women over 30, was a privilege few could afford.

Curriculum expert Salma Hagos knew the solution wasn't just teaching new skills—it was building a network of confidence. Inspired by Singapore's SkillsFuture model, she envisioned a learning system that would work not only for the young or the elite, but for women with lived experience, interrupted educations, and untapped potential.

So she launched W-Connect, a women's skills network that turns learning into earning—by design.

2. LOCAL LEADER'S Vision Statement

“We're not teaching women how to be useful. They already are. We're giving them a system that believes in their future—even if they started late.”

— Salma Hagos, Curriculum Architect and Founder of W-Connect

3. 10 Lessons from The Singapore Way Adapted to the City

Singapore Strategy	Local Adaptation
SkillsFuture: Learning for Life	Women aged 25–55 receive micro-credits for modular, stackable courses
Inclusivity in Opportunity	No formal schooling? No problem. Entry based on life experience
Digital Platforms	App-based portal to register, learn, track earnings, and share testimonials
Industry Relevance	Courses co-designed with local cooperatives and export-focused SMEs
Microcredentialing	Verified badges unlock access to new roles and income brackets
Self-Reliance	70% of content designed for solo learners and flexible schedules
Community Building	Women mentors recruited to host monthly “skill circles” at churches and mosques
Flexibility	“Learn where you live” model includes mobile training vans and WhatsApp classes
Government-Private Sector Link	Ministry of Labor offers job placement boosts for certified learners
Data-Driven Personalization	Learning pathways adapt based on prior skills, literacy, and earnings trajectory

4. The Local Plan

- **Name of Initiative: W-Connect: Women's Skills Network**
- **Objectives:**
 - Equip 50,000 women with practical, marketable skills by 2026
 - Build lifelong learning into women's daily lives and income strategies
 - Close the gender gap in workforce participation through skill-linked micro-entrepreneurship
- **Key Design & Policy Tools:**
 - Skills Micro-Credit Act passed in 2023 (equivalent to USD 100 in learning credits)
 - Public-Private Skills Labs across 5 regional markets
 - Inclusion of "Care Economy" modules—childcare, elder care, domestic service entrepreneurship

5. Implementation Framework

Phase	Activities	Duration	Stakeholders
Phase 1	Needs assessment + platform co-design with women	3 months	Curriculum board, women's NGOs
Phase 2	Pilot 10 core skills in 3 languages (Tigrinya, Arabic, English)	6 months	Local universities, telecoms
Phase 3	Scale across 30 districts with mobile learning vans	8 months	Ministry of Labor, village chiefs
Phase 4	Launch Women's Earning Network with employers	Ongoing	Employers, microfinance orgs

6. Outcomes & Impact (18–24 Months)

- **Quantitative:**
 - 24,000+ women certified in 8 skill domains
 - 17% average increase in household income for certified learners
 - 3,100 women re-entered the formal job market or started microenterprises
- **Qualitative:**
 - A mother of four turned home-cooked meals into a subscription lunch service
 - Former domestic workers are now digital freelancers on African gig platforms
 - Rural women organized their own local cooperatives using W-Connect's free business toolkit

7. Challenges Faced & How They Were Overcome

Challenge	Solution or Mitigation
Low digital literacy among older women	Built WhatsApp audio modules and picture-based interfaces
Cultural resistance to women learning publicly	Partnered with religious and traditional leaders to endorse hubs
Dropout due to unpaid care burdens	Offered caregiving stipends and integrated child-friendly training hubs
Inconsistent internet access	Deployed offline-first courses and community radios for key lessons

8. LOCAL LEADER'S Reflections

"We didn't just mirror Singapore. We rewrote the script for women like my mother—brilliant, busy, and once considered too late to learn. Now, they're leading."

— Salma Hagos