



FACT SHEET

Libya Women Economic Empowerment (LWEE)

BACKGROUND

Grantee: Mennonite Economic Development Agency (MEDA)

Project Title: Libya Women Economic Empowerment (LWEE)

Duration: October 2013 – September 2016

Total Project Amount: \$2,892,208 USD

Objective:

To release the unrecognized economic potential of women's entrepreneurship and thereby contribute to Libya's economic growth and political stability. The project seeks to identify those obstacles that are unique to women's full participation in Libya's formal economy and provide innovative solutions to those obstacles. Not only does increased income result in economic wellbeing, but the creation of business networks and mentorship can build trust within a community and reduce instability. The project continues to work with women-owned and managed businesses by enhancing business networks and market linkages and developing web-enabled and SMS technologies, sustainable business and financial training programs, and tools for increased access to finance.



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. Strengthen business associations, especially those targeting women, to create sustainable platforms for business engagement and advocacy. In addition, LWEE, working through these networks, provides leadership training to women and highlights women in leadership and business roles in Libya and the MENA region.
2. Strengthen business incubation services for women entrepreneurs by working with local organizations to develop innovative products and approaches that expand outreach and impact through information communication technology (ICT) strategies.
3. Improve access to finance for small and medium-sized Libyan businesses by developing a portal for financial services. In addition, the project has a \$125,000 matching grant fund to assist women in the creation of new businesses or growth of existing ones.

Program Status/Achievements:

Phase I (2012-2014) achievements: (1) 200 women entrepreneurs trained on fundamental business skills, (2) eight women awarded matching grants, (3) 20 women provided mentoring and specialized training and follow up, (4) capacity building given to local partners that provide services to better meet the needs of women business owners. Phase II (2014-2016) continues to work with women owned and managed businesses in urban and rural areas. Business networks have been formed with Libya Enterprise, Tripoli Chamber of Commerce, Tripoli Women in Business Council, Tripoli Small Business Center, and Project Silphium. Over a 100 women have been linked together in Tripoli alone. The project completed a survey of women business owners and their ICT needs for businesses to assist service providers better target services and products for women. The project also launched a mentorship program; to date the project has trained 3 mentors who provide regular advice to 6 mentees on business best practices.