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MEDA / USAID

## LIBYA ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

USAID assistance unlocks the untapped economic potential of nascent entrepreneurs and enables more citizens to contribute to Libya's economic growth and political stability.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Libya Economic Empowerment (LEE) program builds on the success of the USAID's previous work, in partnership with Mennonite Economic Development Agency (MEDA), to expand Libyan women's entrepreneurship program to a larger segment of Libyan society to include at-risk youth, who may be vulnerable to engaging in extremist activities. The program opens untapped economic potential of nascent entrepreneurs and enables more citizens to contribute to Libya's economic growth. LEE fosters economic empowerment through business training and access to financing, enabling more people to participate in Libya's economy. For the business community, the program provides networking opportunities for building more effective market linkages. Overall, LEE enhances the role of youth in the economy, increases stability within communities, and improves the livelihoods of those who have participated in the program.

- Life of Program: October 2013 to March 2020
- USAID Implementing Partner: Mennonite Economic Development Agency (MEDA)
- USAID Investment: \$4.49 million

## **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

- LEE provides essential business skills training. LEE's Virtual Business Support platform incorporates a start-up guide aimed at providing step-by-step support for establishing a business in Libya.
- LEE improves access to finance for small and medium-sized Libyan businesses by providing small grants to women and youth entrepreneurs.
- LEE provides "Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Skills for Business" trainings, targeting the needs of youth and women, focusing on topics such as using ICT to support entrepreneurial endeavors; using the internet for business; conducting business online; shaping professional communications, including the professional usage of email communication; and utilizing social media for small-business marketing.
- LEE increases leadership capacity of participating women and youth by conducting the Springboard training for women and the Navigator training for men, which help empower, transform, and advance personal development skills for both women and youth.

## **PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Over 560 people have attended instructor-led business development and information and communications technology skills training.
- Through LEE business plan competitions, 31 women were awarded grants to start or expand a business.
- 18 leadership and empowerment workshops were held in Tripoli, Ghadames, Benghazi, Misrata, Yefren, Zwara, Traghan, Sebha, Zawia, Zintan, Sirt, and Tunis for 384 women and youth.
- 48 business networking events were held in different Libyan cities to allow business owners to network, discuss issues of entrepreneurship, and source inputs, products, and services.
- LEE launched a Virtual Business Incubation portal to provide on-line business development training for start-ups and new businesses in Libya.