

CASE STUDY 2: BRAVE WOMEN (MULTI-COUNTRY PROGRAM)



Context

Women are often the most-affected persons in a conflict affected situation especially when they are forced to head up single parent families (with the men having been lost to the conflict). In such situations, the ability of the women to become independent and look after their families become critically important.

Company/Entity

Civil Society organizations and the Private Sector

ICD Participation

This project is fully funded by the Women Entrepreneurship Finance Initiative (We-Fi). The total amount of approved funding by We-Fi for the BRAVE Women intervention is USD 32.2mn.

IsDBG is one of the designated implementing partners of the We-Fi fund and is implementing this project in Yemen, the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Burkina Faso. ICD provides technical support for the implementation of the project.

The project was launched in July 2018 and its implementation in

Yemen formally began in February 2019. In Yemen, the executing agency is the Small and Micro Enterprise Promotion Service (SMEPS) agency along with 3 local banks who act as custodians of the beneficiary grants (Kuraimi, Tadhamon International Islamic Bank and Saba Islamic Bank).

The aim of the program is to reach at least 1,500 women MSMEs with specialized business trainings and 1,200 of them to qualify for combined grant matching support and technical assistance across three countries namely Yemen, Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

The BRAVE Women Program has five main components:

- Business Resilience Capacity Building through trainings of both business advisors (ToT) and MSMEs
- Business Recovery Support (BRS) through matching grants mechanism
- Value Chain Resilience by supporting the lead firms, business associations and sector specific cooperatives
- BRAVE Women IT Platform and Project Management Unit (PMU) to provide the local Execution Agencies with all necessary capabilities for the project
- A rigorous impact evaluation to assess what works and what does not work for women MSMEs in fragility context

Development Outcomes: Stories from the Beneficiaries

Providing affordable education services in war zone: According to Mrs. Elham Haider, Principle of the Alnabras school in Taiz, one of the most conflicted affected area in Yemen: “Due to the current situation in Taiz, most of public services were partially stopped including education. 80% of the education facilities were not functioning with most of them destroyed because of the ongoing conflict. In some areas, schools had been taken over by militaries and



were regularly targeted by airstrikes. Lately, with life conditions getting worse, I decided with my team to make our services affordable so many students will have a chance to go back to education system. In the last 3 years, we succeeded to cover our operational costs and allowed internally displaced students to come back to school as well. Our mission is not easy at all with the lack of basic services (electricity, water, fuel, etc.) and also the huge inflation rate. However, we will spend all efforts to continue with the available resources and I’m pretty sure that BRAVE Women project is a golden opportunity to help us to increase our number of students”.

BRAVE Women is different from other programs for women: Azah Shoukri, owner of Sabia for cloth in Yemen says: “We already got

in the past different support programs from several local or international organizations but, with BRAVE Women project it’s completely different. This unique project starts first with a professional training to enhance our capabilities to prepare our business continuity plan and then we can get access to the matching grant support. In addition, local banks are supporting us as well to get loans. In the last 5 years, all the financial institutions in Yemen stopped giving loans to women entrepreneurs but now we are so excited to get back those services. This restores the trust relationship between women entrepreneurs and the banks which has been completely lost during the war”.