



▶ Rebuilding Better: Fostering Business Resilience Post-COVID-19

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▶ At a glance



Donor

JPMorgan Chase Foundation



Duration

January 2021 – June 2022



Target beneficiaries

Women entrepreneurs operating small businesses in targeted markets



Geographical focus

Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand



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▶ Project objectives

In South-East Asia, women-owned businesses often lag behind male-owned businesses in terms of size, productivity and profitability. The proportion of formal businesses with female majority ownership ranges from 10.4 per cent in Malaysia, 31.50 per cent in the Philippines to 33.40 per cent in Thailand¹. However, women entrepreneurs tend to be operating in the most disadvantaged sectors or in the lower ends of value chains, where they concentrate on a limited number of activities with little opportunity for value-add and business growth.

Enabling women entrepreneurs' meaningful participation in gender-sensitive entrepreneurship ecosystems has proven multiplier effects on decent employment, poverty eradication and economic growth. Supporting women entrepreneurs is therefore vital for ensuring continued inclusive, resilient and sustainable development in the countries targeted by the project.

As women entrepreneurs in general are less resilient to the impact of adverse economic shocks, ensuring their access to critical support services will be important for ensuring their stabilization and recovery post-COVID-19. This includes taking immediate actions to ensure business continuity as well as assistance to re-activate business activity and build long-term resilience. Women entrepreneurs have been particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing measures, lock-downs and distorted supply chains and markets have exacerbated structural inequities and challenges that typically impede the performance and growth of women-owned businesses, and resulted in many temporarily or permanently closed operations.

1 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2020*, 2020.

► Objectives

The Rebuilding Better project aims to provide support for women entrepreneurs to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and adopt more sustainable and resilient business models. The project targets women-owned small businesses in the manufacturing, service and retail trade sectors in urban areas in Thailand, Malaysia, and Philippines, all of which have seen a severe decline in economic output.

To achieve this, the project works with partners, including government agencies, employers' organisations, trade unions and the private sector, to deliver interventions to improve small businesses' access to training provision, financial services and market information. Digitalization is a crosscutting component, and the project delivers virtual activities to ensure safe support during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as assists support women entrepreneurs to increase their online presence and apply digital technology.

Expected results of the Rebuilding Better project include women entrepreneurs' enhanced access to:

- **Training services.** The project delivers training services and other assistance to women-owned businesses together with local partners and service providers. Topics covered include business and financial management, financial literacy, productivity and occupational safety and health.
- **Financial services and support packages.** The project aims to address key constraints that hinder women entrepreneurs from accessing finance. This includes making information about available financial services more widely available and providing assistance for women entrepreneurs to apply and access such services.
- **Market information and networks.** The project works together with partners to assist women entrepreneurs to take advantage of new and existing market opportunities by providing them with access to networks and up-to-date, reliable, and timely market intelligence.



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With these projected results, the Rebuilding Better project aims for small women-owned businesses to stabilize and recover from COVID-19 and adopt more sustainable and resilient business models. The project also aims to contribute to an inclusive and enabling environment for enterprises in targeted countries. Over time, this will support the economic recovery of targeted countries from COVID-19 and to the generation of decent employment opportunities.

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