

## Microcredit as a Catalyst for Women's Entrepreneurship in Handicrafts Case of ANGEM of Tipaza (Algeria)

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### Abstract:

This research focuses on the significance of microcredit in facilitating and financing women's craft projects, particularly its ability to generate job opportunities. It examines the contribution of financial loans from the National Agency for Microcredit Management in Tipaza towards providing essential financial backing for small craft initiatives. The study evaluates 20 artisanal projects led by women that received funding from the Agency between 2015 and 2022. Our results reveal that microloans, which are interest-free, serve as a crucial option for artisans who struggle to secure financing from conventional banks. By avoiding interest charges, these loans empower women artisans to establish their own businesses, leading to a reduction in poverty and unemployment. The National Agency for Microcredit Management in Tipaza has played a pivotal role in job creation by delivering both financial assistance and moral support.

**Key words:** the national agency for running the micro –loan (ANGEM), female Entrepreneurship, Handicrafts and crafts

### Introduction

What women today enjoy in terms of their status in society is the result of a long struggle and sacrifices made to demand and obtain a range of rights, especially economic and social rights. Today, women are working to assert their presence in various fields, including those that were once considered exclusive to men, and they are actively contributing to driving the wheel of development.

From this perspective, there has been a movement towards helping them realize and succeed in their projects, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, within the framework of various employment policies. Algeria is among the countries that have established support and assistance bodies, including the National Agency for the Management of Microcredit (ANGEM). This agency relies on the mechanism of microcredit aimed at women artisans who stay at home and vulnerable segments of society.

This study comes as an attempt to understand the degree of contribution of this mechanism in supporting and funding the projects of artisanal women. Therefore, we pose the following question: **What is the extent of the contribution of microcredit in providing the necessary support for women entrepreneurs in the Tipaza province?**

In order to answer the posed problem, it is necessary to respond to the following sub-questions:

1. What is women's entrepreneurship, and what are the approaches to support and finance small projects for women artisans?
2. Do the characteristics of microcredit meet the financial requirements of women's artisanal projects?
3. To what extent does the National Agency for the Management of Microcredit (ANGEM) in Tipaza contribute to supporting and assisting women entrepreneurs?

### Research Hypotheses:

1. A woman artisan entrepreneur is any woman who has established her own project related to one of the crafts within the framework of various methods and entities supporting and financing these projects.
2. ANGEM supports women's artisanal projects through financing programs that align with the needs of the individuals concerned."

## Previous Studies:

**First:** The study by Shalouf Farida, "Women Entrepreneurs in Algeria: A Sociological Study," is a MBA thesis in sociology focusing on human resources development and management at the University of Constantine 2, 2009. This study aimed to identify the characteristics of women entrepreneurs in Algeria regarding the establishment and management of their own enterprises. The study utilized a case study methodology employing various techniques, including interviews and observations. It concluded that women in Algeria possess the qualifications and traits that enable them to succeed in this field and positively contribute to social and economic life.

**Second:** The study by Aida Sidrati and Fahima Badisi focused on microfinance as a mechanism for empowering women entrepreneurs and supporting small projects. It is a case study of the National Agency for Microcredit Management in Algeria, published in the Journal of Human and Social Sciences, volume 7, issue 1, March 2021, University of Constantine 2, Abdelhamid Mehri. The study aimed to explore the effectiveness of funding programs for women's small enterprises and the results achieved since the establishment of the agency. Among the findings were:

- The agency contributed to bringing many activities, particularly artisanal ones, from the informal sector into the formal sector through financial support in the form of dual loans.
- The empowerment of women by equipping them with various skills through training programs in different fields, including management.
- Enabling housewives to enter the business world and improve their living standards.

## I. Theoretical aspect:

### 1. Microcredit in Algeria:

Microcredit emerged in Algeria to expand and support the fight against poverty and unemployment (Badisi, 2021). It involves microcredit with an improved interest rate of 2%, which was implemented starting in 1999 across the entire national territory, and its implementation proceeded in two phases:

- **Phase One:** From July 1999 to May 2002, where the loan amount ranged between 50,000 DZD and 350,000 DZD, with an interest rate of 2%.
- **Phase two:** From 2004 to the present day, as a result of the problems encountered in the first phase, the microcredit system entered its second phase. The necessary conditions for benefiting from microcredit were established, which eliminated the collateral system and focused on a social policy aimed at combating poverty, unemployment, and the dire conditions of society (MS. Belhouari. D. & Meziani, 2013).

The program is characterized by several features, including:

- It is targeted at unemployed, poor, and marginalized groups.
- It consists of a small loan valued between 40,000 DZD and 400,000 DZD.
- It represents assistance from the state or international bodies in the form of an interest-free loan when the project's cost exceeds 100,000 DZD.
- Loans are granted within quick timeframes.
- The Joint Guarantee Fund for Microloans covers the guarantee for microcredit.
- It is distinguished by the ease of procedures and the simplicity of the file required to benefit from the loan.
- The interest rate for bank loans ranges from 1% to 2% (www.angem, s.d.).

It also aims to achieve several goals, which can be summarized in the following points:

- Seeking stability and social partnership by encouraging rural residents to return to their lands.
- Improving living conditions by increasing individual income to enhance the nation's wealth.
- Improving income and living conditions for vulnerable groups, especially those with limited incomes (Bouzar & Louggar, 2014).

### 1. Causes of the Emergence of Microcredit:

- Poverty and exclusion are pressing issues for Algeria, defined as the inability to meet basic needs. The groups most vulnerable to poverty include farmers, small breeders, seasonal workers, and low-income families (SMAHI, 2010).
- Moreover, the succession of crises, particularly the external debt crisis, has significantly impacted Algeria's employment situation. The rise in unemployment has been exacerbated by job dismissals resulting from reforms, especially around privatization and structural reforms, as well as the increasing costs of education (Schuler, 1994). (Abdelkrim, 2020)
- Microenterprises rely on microloans to achieve their objectives and interests, which are granted by various institutions, primarily the National Agency for the Development of Entrepreneurship and the National Agency for Microcredit Management. These agencies primarily serve craftsmen and housewives, with loan amounts ranging from 40,000 DZD to 400,000 DZD. Additionally, the National Unemployment Insurance Fund also plays a role in supporting these initiatives (www.angem, s.d.).

## **2. Female Entrepreneurship: A Catalyst for Economic Growth**

The work of women has always been a real challenge in the face of all the obstacles and difficulties they encounter, and the entrepreneur woman is perhaps the most prominent example of this challenge. She has tried to establish her presence in this field and to balance work both inside and outside the home, where she has proven her capabilities, worthiness, and efficiency in various positions she has held, despite the family responsibilities on her shoulders (A.Woldie., 2004).. Crafts are one of the areas that women have ventured into, and in order to develop these projects, Algeria has sought to fund and support them through a series of programs designed to achieve this goal.

### **2.1.The Conceptual Framework of Entrepreneurship in General and Female's Entrepreneurship in Particular:**

Today, entrepreneurship has become the driving force of development in all countries of the world, especially in the Arab countries, due to the significant role it plays. On this basis, we will seek to shed light on its conceptual framework briefly. (Anderson., 2015)

#### **First: Definition of Entrepreneurship, Enterprise, and Entrepreneur:**

Entrepreneurship is a type of behaviour characterized by the pursuit of innovation, along with the organization and reorganization of economic and social mechanisms in order to exploit certain resources and situations. (FAIRCHILD, 2009, pp. 1-16)

It also involves taking risks and accepting failure, as it is a process aimed at creating something different and obtaining value by dedicating the necessary time and effort while bearing the accompanying financial, psychological, and social risks, and at the same time achieving results in the form of financial and personal satisfaction. (ZIMMERER, 2005)

As for enterprise, it is the discovery of available business opportunities by individuals and their exploitation (Starova.L.N, 2002)Regarding the entrepreneur, he leads market exchanges, purchasing from producers and selling to consumers. He buys at a determined price and sells at a price that is uncertain in the future. This also refers to the individual who has the will to turn a new idea or invention into a successful business innovation. This definition aligns with that provided by Peter Drucker in 1985: "a person who can shift economic resources from lower productivity to higher productivity." Both consider the entrepreneur to be someone capable of doing different things that have a greater value than the ordinary. (DEAKINS, 2006)

#### **Second: Characteristics of Enterprises**

Enterprises have reasonable capital, which attracts individuals who lean towards creativity and innovation and who desire direct supervision. They also have individual, family, or limited partnership ownership. The lower the capital, the more a person can own a project that aligns with their abilities and skills. Additionally, one of the most important characteristics of enterprises is managerial independence, where the owner of the enterprise is also its manager. There is less hierarchical progression in these enterprises due to the number of employees, which facilitates quick and easy decision-making and contributes to workforce stability. This also allows for rapid adaptation to social and economic conditions (Meek.W.R, 2012)

Regarding the tasks of enterprises, they are diverse, ranging from social, economic, to cultural tasks. The social tasks include reducing unemployment and improving individuals' living standards while meeting consumers' needs and desires. Economic tasks involve increasing national income, and thus individual income, as well as contributing to national production, which leads to a reduction in imports and an increase in exports, resulting in foreign currency profits and minimizing dependency on foreign sources. (Henry.R.A., 2011) Moreover, they also contribute to funding the state treasury by paying taxes and fees, thus promoting economic integration at the national level. In terms of cultural tasks, they enhance

workers' knowledge of modern technology so they can manage contemporary technological methods and contribute to knowledge dissemination through the existence of scientific clubs, magazines, and newspapers within the framework of training and specialization for workers (Shalouf Farida, 2009, p. 51).

Regarding women entrepreneurs, they are defined as those who choose to establish a business for their own account and take on financial risks while managing their own resources in hopes of making a profit. Feminine entrepreneurship is the process through which a woman or a group of women creates and exploits economic and social resources, including material and financial resources, in an organized manner to provide goods and services to the market (customers) to achieve profits. (Jennings, Brush, & G., 2013).

We can also define her as a woman who possesses specific characteristics and qualities that allow her to take the risk of doing business on her own. She has an entrepreneurial spirit, takes risks, assumes responsibilities, and acts with flexibility and skill, with the goal of success and excellence. (Sevelova.M.A, 2009)

Additionally, she can be defined as any woman who has exploited a marketing opportunity or has the creative ability to transform her ideas into a project of any size, and who has worked hard for its success and development, while bearing the associated risks (Caggese, 2012).

Regarding the reasons that lead women to enter the field of entrepreneurship, some classify motivations into positive and negative, so that the classification criterion is based on the nature of the influencing factor that drives the individual toward entrepreneurship. Thus, positive motivations include willpower, recognizing opportunities, and seeking independence, while negative motivations include being laid off, the desire to escape unemployment, dissatisfaction with a previous job, a lack or absence of opportunities in professional life, and job crises ( Carranza, Dhakal , & Love, 2018) (Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, 2014)

It is noteworthy that women entrepreneurs can be classified according to their motivations into three categories: the first category includes necessity-driven women entrepreneurs who have established their businesses to escape unemployment; this group is characterized by a low level of experience. The second category consists of choice-driven women entrepreneurs, who possess a high level of professional experience; for them, entrepreneurship is an opportunity to continue growing by utilizing their skills. The last category includes women entrepreneurs who wish to balance family and professional life; this group truly wants to continue their professional lives with a degree of freedom to achieve a good family life. (Sarfaraz, 2014, pp. 1-11).

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in women's entrepreneurship due to the important role it plays in economic and social life, as it is an effective element in achieving sustainable development and increasing economic growth. The importance of women's entrepreneurship is evident in its contribution to improving the living standards of families, creating job opportunities, as well as developing exports and directing activities in developmental areas, while showcasing women's potential in the field of entrepreneurship and contributing to the promotion of women and economic growth : (James E. Stoddard & others, (2008),) (Wayan Sudana& others, 2023)

Undoubtedly, women have been able to contribute to entrepreneurial activities and highlight the significance of their role in supporting the national economy through engaging in medium and small enterprises and gaining recognition as an effective element within this sector. (Jennings J. E., 2013, p. 689).

When transitioning to the characteristics of women entrepreneurs, we find that women entrepreneurs or leaders are distinguished by a set of attributes that qualify them to enter the field of entrepreneurship and business. These characteristics include being economic agents, where women focus on their role in creating projects that fall within the economic cycle in both manufacturing and services. Additionally, they are innovative, as women's entrepreneurial activities respond to environmental changes (both internal and external), thereby incorporating innovation and presenting new ideas with women as agents of change (Henry, 2016).

Moreover, they are risk-takers, as women entrepreneurs assume uncertainty about the future and strive to achieve profit, which necessarily accompanies the potential for loss. Another characteristic is that they are inventive, since entrepreneurship is generally associated with innovation, and their projects are presented in new and improved ways. Innovation can take various forms, such as new products, new sources of raw materials, new markets, or new production methods. (Gundry, 2002).

Furthermore, they are dynamic. Given that entrepreneurship and projects are dynamic functions, women's entrepreneurial activities thrive with environmental changes, leading to numerous beneficial opportunities. Additionally, women entrepreneurs are tasked with making various dynamic decisions, especially since there are few rules and principles that can be used to start businesses in a rapidly changing and heterogeneous environment. (Goyal, 2014).

Regarding the economic and social impacts of women's entrepreneurship, it is undoubtedly the case that the entrepreneur's role extends beyond their individual contributions to influencing macroeconomic mechanisms and the associated equilibrium, as well as the social environment, which has a strong connection to economic needs (Bano, Ashfaq, Neelam, & Mas'udah, 2021).

This can be highlighted as follows:

**Table N°1: Economic and Social Impacts of Women's Entrepreneurship.**

| <b>Economic Impacts</b>   | <b>Social Impacts</b>  |
|---|--|
| Increase in per capita income and changes in business and societal structures, in terms of supply and demand; | Fairness in social development and wealth distribution - "regional balance in the process of economic development" |
| Guiding activities in targeted developmental areas;   | Contributing to women's employment;  |
| Boosting exports and maintaining competitiveness;   | Reducing rural-to-urban migration;   |
| Contributing to the overall healthy growth of the economy.  |  |

This has been confirmed by societies that allow women to enter economic fields in general, and the entrepreneurial field in particular, as they have shown that women around the world are in a position that enables them to make a full and significant contribution to a bright future for their regions. On the other hand, Taizone Shikawa, Deputy Director-General of UNIDO, stated on a special occasion for International Women's Day, "Rural women are active participants in economic and social development; they ensure food security and nutrition, combat rural poverty, and improve the well-being of their families, yet they still face serious challenges. ( Carranza, Dhakal , & Love, 2018) .

There are some difficulties that women face when joining the labour market, which may relate either to the women themselves, to society, or to the work environment. The personal difficulties often stem from women's subjugation to male authority and the decisions that pertain to their education and employment.

Additionally, women face psychological pressures at work, such as long working hours, especially in the agricultural sector, which can lead to issues regarding their attention to family responsibilities. Furthermore, societal challenges can be summarized in the limits imposed by customs and traditions on women engaging in many professions, a lack of societal acceptance regarding women's participation in jobs typically held by men, and a weak social awareness of the importance of women's roles. (Raghuvanshi, 2017).

In addition to the difficulties related to the work environment, it can be noted that there is a low level of wages offered in the agricultural sector compared to the public sector, and the salary offered does not match the effort exerted, along with the lack of bonuses and financial incentives. (Valdeci Ferreira dos Santos, 2019).

It is also important to highlight the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, as revealed by a study conducted on women entrepreneurs in five Arab countries (Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, and the UAE). These challenges include acquiring financial management skills, availability of quality labor and retaining it, difficulty in obtaining funding sources, and the high cost of public services ( CHIKH-AMNACHE & MEKHZOUML, 2023).

## **II. Practical Aspect**

### **1. Types of Financing Provided by the Agency and the Conditions for Obtaining Them:**

The agency relies on two forms of financing:

- Interest-free micro-loans of up to 100,000 DZD, which may rise to 250,000 DZD for southern provinces, to be repaid over a period of 24 to 36 months.
- Significant loans not exceeding 1.000.000 DZD that require the intervention of a bank as a third party, to be repaid over a duration of 12 to 60 months.

These loans benefit from tax reductions.

Starting from 2011, these financing forms underwent modifications to enhance the devices supporting the establishment of activities, and these modifications included the following:

Table N°2: Financing Models in the National Agency for the Management of Microcredit.

| Project Value       | Contractor Type   | Personal Contribution | Bank Loan | Agency Loan | Interest Rate        |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------------|
| Up to 100,000 DZD   | All types (purchase of raw materials)                       | 0%                    | -         | 100%        | -                    |
| Up to 250,000 DZD   | All types (purchase of raw materials in southern provinces) | 0%                    | -         | -           | -                    |
| Up to 1,000,000 DZD | All types   | 1%                    | 70%       | 29%         | 1% for special areas |

Source: National Agency for Microcredit Management [www.angem.dz](http://www.angem.dz)

The categories eligible for benefiting from microcredit are:

- Stay-at-home women
- Persons with disabilities
- Victims of the national tragedy
- Released prisoners
- Candidates for illegal immigration
- Returning illegal immigrants
- Artisans, farmers, livestock breeders, small traders, university graduates, and vocational training center graduates

The targeted areas include:

- Poor municipalities and areas requiring development
- Southern regions and high plateaus, rural areas

The activities funded by the agency include:

- In the industrial sector: Food processing in all its forms, clothing manufacturing, leather industry, woodworking, etc.
- In the handicraft sector: Traditional textiles and rugs, traditional embroidery, painting on silk and glass, pottery, etc.
- In the agriculture sector: Livestock breeding, meat and milk production, poultry farming, cultivation of vegetables, fruits, and seeds, etc.
- In the services sector: Information technology, hairdressing and beauty services, fast food, repair services for cars and various devices, etc.
- In the health sector: General or specialized medical clinics, dentistry
- In the construction and public works sector: Electricity, painting, carpentry, masonry, etc.

#### Study Scope:

To conduct this study, we targeted women artisans of various ages and activities, and their place of residence, within the ANGEM ("National Agency for Microcredit Management.")agency in Tipaza." Due to the small size of the study population, all female artisans who benefited from the agency's services over the span of seven years from 2015 to 2022 were included. A total of 25 questionnaires were distributed, as shown in the following table:

Table N° 3: Study Population and Sample

| Item                       | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Questionnaires Distributed | 25        | 100%       |
| Questionnaires Returned    | 25        | 100%       |

|                        |    |     |
|------------------------|----|-----|
| Blank Questionnaires   | 20 | 8%  |
| Invalid Questionnaires | 30 | 12% |
| Valid Questionnaires   | 20 |     |

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### Axis1: Characteristics of the Study Sample:

Through the posed questions, the characteristics of the sample were determined as follows:

#### 1. Age of the Female Entrepreneur:

We will present the research results in the following table:

Table N°4: Age of the Female Entrepreneur

| Age Group           | Frequencies | Percentage |
|---------------------|-------------|------------|
| Between 18-29 years | 06          | 30%        |
| Between 30-39 years | 06          | 30%        |
| Between 40-49 years | 05          | 25%        |
| Between 50-59 years | 01          | 5%         |
| Over 60 years       | 02          | 10%        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>20</b>   |            |

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#### 2. Distribution of Sample Members by Educational Level:

Regarding educational level, the results are as follows:

Table N° 5: Distribution of Sample Members by Educational Level

| Education Level | Frequencies | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|
| No Education    | 04          | 20%        |
| Primary         | 02          | 10%        |
| Intermediate    | 06          | 30%        |
| Secondary       | 06          | 30%        |
| University      | 02          | 10%        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>20</b>   |            |

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#### 3. Distribution of Sample Members by Place of Residence:

Regarding place of residence, the results are as shown in the following table:

Table N°6: Distribution of Sample Members by Place of Residence

| Place of Residence | Frequencies | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------|------------|
| Rural              | 06          | 30%        |
| Urban              | 14          | 70%        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>20</b>   | <b>100</b> |

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#### 4. Distribution of Sample Members by Activity Sector

Table number shows the distribution of sample members according to activity sector:

Table N°7: Distribution of Sample Members by Activity Sector

| Activity Sector               | Frequencies | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Industry                      | 08          | 40%        |
| Construction and Public Works | 00          | 0%         |

|                    |           |            |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Services           | 03        | 15%        |
| Traditional Crafts | 09        | 45%        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>20</b> | <b>100</b> |

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Table N°: 8: Number of workers in the project."

| Number of workers | Frequencies | Percentage  |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1                 | 10          | 50%         |
| 2                 | 05          | 25%         |
| 3                 | 03          | 15%         |
| 4                 | 02          | 10%         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>20</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

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"Table N°9: Employment and Selection of Workers in the Project

| Method of Selecting Workers      | Frequency |    |       | Percentage |     |       |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----|-------|------------|-----|-------|
|                                  | yes       | No | total | yes        | No  | total |
| Based on Professional Competence | 16        | 04 | 20    | 80%        | 20% | 100%  |
| "Based on Kinship                | 11        | 09 | 20    | 55%        | 45% | 100%  |
| Based on Certification           | 08        | 12 | 20    | 40%        | 60% | 100%  |
| Based on Cheap Labor             | 13        | 07 | 20    | 65%        | 35% | 100%  |

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## 5.Location of the Project:

Table N°10: the location of the project.

| Location of Project Creation | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| In the House                 | 14        | 70%        |
| Outside the House            | 06        | 30%        |
| Total                        | 20        | 100%       |

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## Axis2: The Supportive Environment for Establishing Women's Projects1- Support Devices for Entrepreneurship in Algeria

Table N°11: Support Devices Known to Women Entrepreneurs

| Support Devices Known to Women Entrepreneurs | Yes       |            | No        |            | Total     |            |
|--|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|  | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| National Agency for Business Development     | 18        | 90%        | 02        | 10%        | 20        | 100%       |
| National Unemployment Insurance Fund         | 11        | 55%        | 09        | 45%        | 20        | 100%       |
| National Investment Development Agency       | 02        | 10%        | 18        | 90%        | 20        | 100%       |
| National Microcredit Management Agency       | 20        | 100%       | 00        | 0%         | 20        | 100%       |



|  |    |     |    |      |    |      |
|--|----|-----|----|------|----|------|
| National Loan Guarantee Fund                 | 00 | 00% | 20 | 100% | 20 | 100% |
| Investment Guarantee Fund                    | 00 | 00% | 20 | 100% | 20 | 100% |
| Business Incubators and Facilitation Centers | 00 | 00% | 20 | 100% | 20 | 100% |

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#### Reason for Choosing the Agency:

Table N°12: shows the reason for choosing the agency.

| Reason for Choosing the Agency | Frequency |    | Percentage |     |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----|------------|-----|
|                                | Yes       | No | Yes        | No  |
| Value of the Loan              | 12        | 08 | 60%        | 40% |
| Ease of Procedures             | 14        | 06 | 70%        | 30% |
| Speed of Loan Acquisition      | 10        | 10 | 50%        | 50% |
| Quality of Reception           | 02        | 18 | 10%        | 90% |

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#### Axis 3: Analysis of Factors Influencing the Project

- A descriptive analysis was conducted on the study variables, where the mean and standard deviation for each question in the questionnaire were calculated to identify the trends of the respondents in the study.

Table N°13: Encouraging Factors for Establishing the Project Deviation

| Statement  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation | Rating |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|------|--------------------|--------|
| Ease of Access to Financing                        | 01                | 01       | 02      | 07    | 09             | 4.1  | 3.92               | High   |
| Ease of Access to Necessary Information            | 06                | 10       | 04      | 00    | 00             | 1.9  | 0.84               | Low    |
| Simplicity of Administrative Procedures            | 00                | 01       | 01      | 08    | 10             | 4.35 | 4.12               | High   |
| Tax Advantages Offered to Women's Artisan Projects | 02                | 05       | 03      | 04    | 06             | 3.35 | 3.20               | Medium |

The results indicate that ease of access to financing and simplicity of administrative procedures are among the most encouraging factors for women artisans entrepreneurs to establish small projects, with the mean for these items being 4.10 and 4.35, respectively. In contrast, the item regarding ease of obtaining information on how to establish a private institution recorded the lowest score, with a mean of 1.9.

Table N°14: Motivations for Establishing the Project

| Statement               | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation | Rating |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|------|--------------------|--------|
| Professional Experience | 01                | 01       | 00      | 08    | 10             | 4.25 | 4.07               | High   |

|                                      |    |    |    |    |    |      |      |           |
|--------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|------|------|-----------|
| Family Support                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 09 | 11 | 4.55 | 4.30 | Very High |
| Eliminating Unemployment             | 00 | 00 | 00 | 08 | 12 | 4.60 | 4.35 | Very High |
| Personal Ambition                    | 03 | 03 | 04 | 06 | 04 | 3.25 | 3.07 | Medium    |
| Desire to Work                       | 04 | 02 | 03 | 06 | 05 | 3.30 | 3.18 | Medium    |
| Market Knowledge                     | 10 | 06 | 02 | 01 | 01 | 1.85 | 1.14 | Low       |
| Project Profitability                | 06 | 10 | 01 | 02 | 01 | 2.10 | 1.51 | Low       |
| Presence of Project Support Agencies | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 3.50 | 3.34 | Medium    |

We observe from the results of the table above that the study sample agrees at very high rates that the motivations for establishing the project are primarily to eliminate unemployment and receive family assistance, with the mean for these factors being 4.60 and 4.55, respectively. Additionally, the factor of professional experience plays a significant role in the choice of artisan women, with a mean of 4.25. In contrast, the survey results indicate that artisan project goods are challenging to market and have weak income because market knowledge and project profitability have a low role in project selection, with means of 1.85 and 2.10, respectively.

**Table N°15:** Aspirations of Contractors with the State Agency for Microcredit Management

| Statement  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation | Rating    |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|------|--------------------|-----------|
| Satisfaction with the Agency's Performance   | 00                | 01       | 01      | 08    | 10             | 4.35 | 4.12               | Very High |
|  | %0                | %5       | %5      | %40   | %50            |      |                    |           |
| Assistance Provided by the Agency  | 2                 | 1        | 00      | 07    | 11             | 4.30 | 4.13               | Very High |
|  | %10               | %5       | %0      | %35   | %55            |      |                    |           |
| Type of Activities Eligible for Microloans   | 00                | 1        | 2       | 8     | 09             | 4.25 | 4.02               | Very High |
|  | %0                | %5       | %10     | %40   | %45            |      |                    |           |
| Do you think your project has had a positive impact on your social and economic life | 04                | 07       | 04      | 05    | 00             | 2.5  | 2.05               | Medium    |
|  | %20               | %35      | %20     | %25   | %0             |      |                    |           |
| Accompaniment and Follow-up During and After Project Completion                      | 2                 | 04       | 05      | 04    | 05             | 3.3  | 3.11               |           |
|  | %10               | %20      | %25     | %20   | %25            |      |                    | Medium    |
| Benefit from Training Courses in the Field   | 04                | 04       | 03      | 03    | 06             | 3.15 | 3.05               | Medium    |
|  | %20               | %20      | %15     | %15   | %30            |      |                    |           |

The results of the table confirm the importance of the National Agency for Microcredit Management in supporting women's artisan projects. The results show that 50% of the study sample are very satisfied with the agency's performance.

Furthermore, the results indicate that the response rate to the assistance provided by the agency for repaying the loan is very high, with a mean of 4.30. Additionally, there is a variety of activities that can be financed by microloans from the agency, with results showing a high level of approval from the sample at 45%, and a mean of 4.25. It is also indicated that

the project has a moderate impact on their economic and social lives, with a mean of 2.5. The results further confirm the satisfaction of the sample regarding the role and importance of accompaniment and follow-up during and after project completion by the agency, with a mean of 3.3, in addition to their satisfaction with the benefits of training courses offered by the agency in management fields, with a mean of 3.15.

### Extent of the Agency's Contribution to Improving the Artisan Projects Sector

Table N°16: Contribution of the National Agency to Improving the Artisan Projects Sector

| Tasks                      | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation | Rating |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|------|--------------------|--------|
| Financing                  | 01                | 02       | 01      | 07    | 09             | 4.05 | 3.88               | High   |
| Training                   | 03                | 03       | 03      | 06    | 05             | 3.35 | 3.20               | Medium |
| Accompaniment and Advice   | 03                | 02       | 02      | 07    | 06             | 3.55 | 3.42               | High   |
| Granting Tax Privileges    | 02                | 03       | 03      | 08    | 04             | 3.45 | 3.25               | High   |
| Awareness-Raising Sessions | 03                | 05       | 04      | 03    | 05             | 3.10 | 2.93               | Medium |

We observe from the results of the table that the agency has a role and importance in improving the artisan projects sector. We see that the members of the study sample agree on the role of financing, accompaniment, and advice from the agency's staff, as well as the granting of privileges in improving the artisan projects sector, with high average scores of 4.05-3.55, and 3.45, respectively. Additionally, training and awareness-raising sessions aimed at introducing the microcredit sector play a role in developing artisan projects, with moderate average scores of 3.35 and 3.10, respectively.

### Discussion of Survey Results:

#### Interpretation of Results Related to the Project:

The study indicated that the majority of women's projects under study range between 3 and 5 years, which suggests that women's entry into the business field in Tipaza is still recent. Most of their projects are home-based, which reduces their commuting burdens. The main challenges faced by artisan women are the difficulty in marketing their products.

#### Interpretation of Results Related to the Supportive Environment for Establishing Women's Projects:

From the study, we conclude that women entrepreneurs resort to governmental mechanisms, most notably the National Agency for Microcredit Management, which significantly contributes to financing women's artisan projects. The reason behind their choice is the simplicity of the procedures followed as well as the loan amount, which helps in timely repayment.

#### Interpretation of Results Regarding Personal Factors Affecting the Project:

#### Analysis and Discussion of Interview Results:

Through the interviews conducted with a group of artisan entrepreneurs in Tipaza, we intended to gain an overarching understanding of women's artisan entrepreneurship in the state, as well as to learn about their views on the artisan business field and the level of support provided by the microcredit agency to this category in establishing their projects.

We focused on selecting entrepreneurs from various age groups and civil statuses. Among the respondents were young women under the age of 30 and others older than that. There were single women who found in entrepreneurship a personal space to showcase their full potential, married women who wanted to contribute to improving their family's living standards, as well as divorced women who found in establishing a business a way out of the social problems they faced and the harsh perceptions of society.

We also ensured that the sample represented a balance in educational levels, selecting entrepreneurs from primary, intermediate, secondary, and university levels, so that we could have a comprehensive idea of their thoughts regarding women's entrepreneurship. University and secondary-level entrepreneurs view the development of their institutions as a path to better opportunities, while those at primary and intermediate levels aim to secure an income and do not seek development or advancement.

From the results of the interviews, we found that most artisan entrepreneurs perceive the loan acquisition process as somewhat difficult due to the complex procedures involved in financing institutions from the microcredit agency.

Moreover, the agency does not provide any follow-up for artisan entrepreneurs after their projects launch, whereas they should have been accompanied in managing and developing their projects through advice and guidance.

Additionally, they received numerous aids and privileges while establishing their projects, including:

- **Training in Enterprise Management:** Artisans received three days of theoretical training in enterprise management, covering how to establish a business and principles of management, conducted by trainers affiliated with the microcredit agency in Tipaza.
- **Training in Marketing:** They also received theoretical training on marketing products, which would help them in selling their products.
- **Tax Privileges:** They benefited from tax privileges ranging from 3 to 6 years depending on their geographical area and the nature of their activity.

The study revealed that most artisan women entrepreneurs believe that the loan amount is insufficient to establish their projects. While this amount may be enough to start the project with basic equipment, it remains inadequate for progressing the project and considering its development.

Furthermore, the study showed that most artisan women entrepreneurs have succeeded in their projects by showcasing their abilities, developing their talents, and proving their competencies in practice, competing with men in all fields. However, this does not preclude them from facing numerous challenges and obstacles during or after the realization of their projects, among which we mention.

The prolonged period for receiving the loan due to complex administrative procedures and the multitude of required and difficult documents, especially the ownership or lease contract for the professional premises amid rising rental costs."

The loan amount is low and insufficient to start the project as it should be. There is difficulty in marketing products or finding clients, especially in light of the competition from imported products sold at low prices. The cost of raw materials is high. The lending institutions do not follow up on the projects of artisan women to help them solve their problems.

On another note, during our interviews with artisan entrepreneurs, we addressed their opinions on women's entrepreneurship in Algeria. The majority of them believe that it is very acceptable and continuously evolving, as women are striving to enter the world of finance and business, and are no longer just housewives or simple employees.

However, they expressed their dissatisfaction with the experience, as despite the determination of women to face challenges, they have not received sufficient support and follow-up from the relevant authorities to develop as needed, which could allow them to contribute to the national economy if they received adequate support.

When asked whether the Wilaya Agency for Microcredit Management helped them achieve their desired goals, they responded that they had achieved a negligible percentage of their goals, with aspirations that far exceed what they have achieved so far. However, they do not deny the agency's contribution to helping them get started with their projects, which is the first step toward success, through support, funding, and helping them to connect with one another and exchange ideas and experiences, including granting them the opportunity to participate in exhibitions and competitions at the local and national levels. Additionally, the agency organizes what is known as the Entrepreneurship Network, where it conducts training days for artisan women and gathers them to showcase their products so that each can benefit from others' offerings as raw materials for their activities.

In general, we can conclude that the microcredit agency in Tipaza has played an important role in encouraging artisan entrepreneurs to refine their talents and realize their ideas in practice.

### Conclusion:

Through our discussion of the role of microcredit in supporting and financing women's artisan projects by studying the actual situation of the National Agency for Microcredit Management in Tipaza, we attempted to answer the following problem: To what extent does microcredit contribute to supporting and financing artisan projects in the Tipaza Province? We reached several results, outlined as follows:

- Microcredit is directed at citizens without income or those with irregular income, in addition to housewives.
- Microcredit was established to encourage the emergence of self-employment and home-based work, especially for women.
- Women entrepreneurs need financial support at the beginning of their activities, which leads them to seek external sources to finance their projects.
- The National Agency for Microcredit Management is one of the most important entities supporting women artisanal entrepreneurs in establishing their projects through funding programs and assistance provided to them.

- The lack of continuous support is one of the greatest obstacles preventing women entrepreneurs from achieving success and effectiveness.
  - The National Agency for Microcredit Management provides financial assistance and tax privileges to women entrepreneurs; however, it does not provide the necessary support and follow-up for beneficiaries.
- Based on this, the hypothesis stating that the National Agency for Microcredit supports women's artisan projects through a funding program that aligns with the needs of the relevant activities is verified. As for the hypothesis regarding the contribution of the National Agency for Microcredit in Tipaza to supporting and accompanying women entrepreneurs through financial assistance and tax privileges, this is also a verified hypothesis. Although most women were neutral in their responses because they believed that the support should be ongoing, many members of the sample agreed that the privileges granted are seen as positive points for establishing small projects.

### Recommendations:

- Work on increasing loan amounts to assist in the successful launch of small projects.
- Intensify training programs for women entrepreneurs to ensure sustainability.
- Improve support methods for project owners throughout the entire process of establishing small enterprises from the project idea to post-implementation.
- Reduce administrative procedures by eliminating the requirement for a commercial premises to obtain bank approval.
- Organize workshops and exhibitions to promote and market goods.
- Implement Islamic financing methods by eliminating tripartite financing.
- Create a database in the field of entrepreneurship for exchange between associations and the sharing of experiences, as well as for introducing successful projects.

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