



# FROM DEPENDENTS TO **BUSINESS OWNERS**

# Introduction

Against the complex backdrop of COVID-19 – and because of social distancing regulations, the fear of infection, and the lack of steady revenue – many Yemenis were forced to abandon their businesses of all sizes resulting in many lost jobs, a further devastated economy, and a sense of hopelessness

To assist during this difficult time, in partnership with the **King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief)** and the **Small and Micro Enterprise Promotion Service (SMEPS)**, the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** launched the **Vocational and Business Skills Training and Support Project**. This project assists young entrepreneurs – especially women – to establish businesses, engage them in the labor market, and increase their income.

By developing their business, vocational, technical, and craftsmanship skills, the trained entrepreneurs helped create and grow a variety of industries, not only benefitting themselves, but their communities too. Here are some of their success stories.

## AHDAF ABDULMAWLA

Textiles and handloom trainee

Coping with the negative impacts of Yemen's ongoing conflict, Ahdaf used her henna talent to help support her family and keep food on the table. At first, working as a henna artist was sufficient to help the family, but after the necessary isolation during COVID-19, things quickly got worse.

## AHDAF ABDULMAWLA

*"I had to stop working as a henna artist because of the pandemic's social distancing and protective measures. But luckily the vocational training helped me start my Ma'waz weaving business, something I could do in isolation."*

Ahdaf now runs her own business with confidence, is able to support her family and even plans to expand the business by hiring more women.



## SHATHA BAMOUSA

Textiles and handloom trainee

After her husband lost his job because of COVID-19, Shatha did all she could to find work and support her family, despite never having worked before.

*“I had always been a housewife, but I always wanted to support my husband. The vocational training taught me a lot about starting and managing a business and I used the provided tools to successfully start my own business.”*

Like other project trainees, Shatha now runs her own fishing net weaving business, enabling her to successfully support her family and provide for their needs.



**SHATHA BAMOUSA**

## SIHAM MAHROUS

Textiles and handloom trainee

*“I am passionate about weaving, and I wanted to start a Ma’awiz weaving business. This training is the first step towards achieving my dream!”*

The vocational training helped Siham pursue her dream of starting her own Ma’waz handloom business and gave her the business and practical skills as well as provided her with the tools she needed. She is now reaping the benefits of the support she received.



**SIHAM MAHROUS**

*“This training has equipped me with the necessary skills in business management. It has changed our lives, and I can now support my daughters to finish their higher studies! I will certainly encourage and train all interested girls in the area.”*



## ANSAR BA SHARAHEEL

Food processing trainee

*“With this training, I now know what to do and how to do it! I will expand my sweets business at home and use social media to market my products and grow my business!”*

Among the business management skills taught to the young entrepreneurs was networking and product marketing.

Starting from home, Ansar began distributing her products to grocery stores, shops, and markets and is taking advantage of ceremonies and holidays to grow her clientele.

*“I market my products on WhatsApp, social media, and even take online orders. Once my work is well-known, I want to open the biggest pastry shop, hiring and helping many people from my community.”*

## AISHA BA WAZEER

Food processing trainee

*“I’m very blessed with this training opportunity as it helped change my life – allowing me to provide for my family and support my children’s education.”*

Speaking of the knowledge she gained, Aisha listed the different products she and her colleagues learned through the food processing training, including hygiene, food processing, and food dehydration.

They learned how to dry fish, fruit, and vegetables, as well as how to prepare pickles, sauces, pastries, dairy products, and various types of fruit jams.

*“The vocational training kick-started my entrepreneurship. With the knowledge and skills I learned and the tools I received, I started my yogurt and pickle-making business. Now I aspire to expand my business and employ more people”*



AISHA BA WAZEER



## NADHERAH MOHAMMED

Food processing trainee

*“I didn’t work at all after finishing high school, but thanks to the vocational training and its support, I now run my personal project confidently.”*

Just like other ambitious girls who joined the programme, Nadherah always wanted to improve her family’s living condition, but she did not have the opportunity until she joined the vocational project training and received its support.

The training provided her with knowledge and supported her with the tools she needed to pursue her dream.

*“I not only learned about business management, I was able to learn more about making pickles, pastries, and spices and started my own successful home-based pickle-making project.”*

**NADHERAH MOHAMMED**





**JUMA'A SAIF**

## **JUMA'A SAIF**

Food processing trainee

*“I never thought I would have my own business, but here I am – thanks to the vocational training and great support I received. It helped me get the tools I needed for my business, as well as the material to begin!”*

Juma'a, a Social Science graduate, is very excited about her vocational training experience and appreciates how learning these valuable skills changed her life forever.

*“It's the training that taught me how to start and manage my business. I learned so much!”*

## HADIYA ALI

Food processing trainee

*“I am a businesswoman now! I run my own business, support my husband, and provide for my large family!”*

After her husband lost his work due to the conflict and then COVID-19, life got harder for Hadiya, a mother of eight. This change dramatically when she started her dairy product business after attending the local vocational training. She also received a grant to help her get her business established.



HADIYA ALI

*“In addition to making pickles, natural juices, pastries, and dairy products, I learned so much in the training about starting and running a business. But I think what really helped me start my business were the appliances and materials provided by the vocational training .”*

The **Vocational and Business Skills Training and Support Project** was funded by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Center (KSrelief) and implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Small and Micro Enterprise Promotion Service (SMEPS).

The **US\$ 3 million project** helped improve Yemeni livelihoods and access to productive services by providing training and support in: entrepreneurship, agro-business and food processing, textiles and handloom, in addition to technical skills like carpentry, auto maintenance, and repairs of mobile phones and appliances. The project provided project participants with in-kind grants to help them establish their own business.

The first phase of the project finished in June 2022 and the project is expected to start a second, **US\$4 million**, phase.

