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وكالة تنمية المنشآت
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Small & Micro Enterprise
Promotion Service



Um Khalifa for salted fish



In the coastal village of Al-Arra, in Hadhramaut Governorate, Sara, a mother of five children, has become a beacon of resilience and empowerment. Known affectionately as ‘Um Khalifa,’ Sara named her home-based fish production venture after her middle child, Khalifa. Her journey began in September 2024, when she received a grant from the Sustainable Fisheries Development Project in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (SFISH) project, funded by the World Bank Middle East & North Africa in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and implemented (UNDP) with local partner the Small and Micro Enterprise Promotion Service (SMEPS). With no prior experience in production, marketing, or sales, Sara started her project from scratch. “I had no idea how to begin, but I was determined to make it work,” she recalls. The SFISH project provided her with technical and administrative training, equipping her with essential skills in tuna preservation, product marketing, and cost management. This support enabled her to transform her coastal environment into a source of livelihood, producing salted fish, smoked fish, and tuna from her home kitchen.



Overcoming Challenges and Building a Business

Before starting her project, Sara’s family relied on her husband’s modest income of less than \$50 a month from working in a confectionery shop. The family struggled to make ends meet, and Sara had no prior experience in running a business.



However, with the project's support, she quickly turned her home kitchen into a thriving production hub. Despite the challenges of working in a small space—such as the strong odors from fish preparation affecting her and her children—Sara persevered.

Her husband, who has extensive experience in fishing, became her strongest ally.

He assists in purchasing raw materials, marketing the products, and delivering them to local restaurants. Together, they have built a steady clientele, supplying two restaurants regularly—one in their local area and another in a neighboring region. On average, Sara produces around 30 fish products weekly, with daily production sometimes reaching up to 15 products. This growing demand is a testament to the quality of her work and the trust she has built with her customers.

Transforming Lives Through Financial Independence

Sara's project has not only improved her family's financial situation but also transformed their dynamics. Her income now surpasses her husband's, allowing her to contribute significantly to the household expenses and meet her children's needs. "Before, we could barely afford the basics. Now, we can provide for our children and even save a little," she shares. This newfound financial stability has brought hope and security to the family.

The grant provided by the SFISH project included essential tools such as a refrigerator, oven, gas cylinder, cooking pots, and an ice tank, which enhanced Sara's production and storage capabilities. These resources have been instrumental in scaling her business and ensuring the quality of her products.



Future Hopes and Aspirations:

Sara's ambitions extend far beyond her home kitchen. She dreams of establishing an independent workshop in her yard, where she can increase production and hire additional workers to meet the growing demand for her products. "I never imagined I would reach this stage," she says. "But seeing the impact on my family's life, I am determined to grow my business even further."

Sara's story is a powerful example of how determination and the right support can transform lives. Through the SFISH project, she has become a successful entrepreneur and a role model for other women in her community. Her journey underscores the importance of empowering women to achieve financial independence and contribute to their families' well-being.

Today, Sara stands as a testament to the transformative power of resilience and support. Her story is a reminder that with the right opportunities, women can overcome challenges, break barriers, and build a brighter future for themselves and their families.





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