



## RESTORING LIVELIHOODS AND REGAINING SECURITY, ONE PROJECT AT A TIME

Cash assistance from Oxfam enabled these Yemenis to build their small businesses and tackle the instability brought on by seven years of war.

**DIVYA AMLADI | SUMMER 2022**

March 2022 marked seven years since the Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition entered an already vicious conflict in Yemen. That is more than seven years of death, destruction, and hunger that Yemenis have had to endure. With their livelihoods lost, people struggle to purchase what's available on the market.

Nazrah Mohsen, a mother of five from Abyan governorate, is one of millions of Yemenis struggling to meet her family's basic needs. Mohsen, who had training in beehive construction, wanted to generate steady income, so she registered a business idea with an Oxfam program. The program provided a financial grant that allowed her and her husband to establish a beehive-construction and bee-breeding business.

"When we received support from Oxfam, at first, I built a few beehives," Mohsen says. "Over time, people began coming in crowds to buy from us, and the sales increased. Some of our clients sell these beehives at the market, while others keep them in their homes to breed bees."

Mohsen's children now registered at school, she and her husband also renovated their house and have been able to set aside some money for emergencies. But, with prices in the market rising, their sales have begun to decline. "I took the beehives I built to the market to sell them, but nobody wanted to buy them like before," she says. The price of sugar, essential food for raising bees, is also becoming unaffordable. Mohsen is eager to move past this challenge. "My aspirations for the

future are simple," she says, "like purchasing a small generator to operate the electric chainsaw because the electricity is unstable in our area."

### HOW OXFAM IS FIGHTING THE ESCALATING COSTS OF WAR

As Yemen enters another year of war, three-quarters of the population is in urgent need of humanitarian support. In March, it was recorded that 17.4 million people were going hungry, with predictions that this will rise to 19 million by the end of 2022. The economic dimension of the war has sparked a fuel crisis, which in turn has led to increasing prices of essential items such as food, water, and medicines, making them unaffordable for



many who are already struggling to meet their daily needs. The Ukraine crisis has only exacerbated the situation, because Yemen imports 42 percent of its grain from Ukraine.

In response to these ongoing crises, Oxfam helps people like Mohsen start businesses and support themselves so they can survive and sustain their families. We also run cash-for-work projects that pay people to rehabilitate essential infrastructure, such as roads and water systems. Every year, Oxfam reaches around 280,000 people with these kinds of projects. In 2020–2021, Oxfam disbursed \$6,984,985 to individuals.

Beyond distributing cash to families, Oxfam works with local governments and organizations to rebuild municipal water and sanitation systems and to provide water to displaced people to reduce the risk of disease like cholera and COVID-19. Oxfam worked in a broad coalition to successfully urge the Biden administration to end the sales of weapons being used by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in Yemen starting in 2021.

## A NOSE FOR BUSINESS

Anesa Shoai Abdullah Munaseer Al-Domainy, 39, is another grant recipient in Yemen. She opened a perfume and incense business in Sa'ada, hoping to cover basics and school fees for her children. After registering with Oxfam, she received two grants amounting to 350,000 Yemini rial (YR)—about \$1,400—which helped her expand her business. She used the first grant to purchase perfume, incense, and other supplies from the capital city, Sana'a.

"My project was small, but after my name was registered with Oxfam, my situation changed for the best," Al-Domainy says. Since participating in the Oxfam program, Al-Domainy's capital has rapidly increased, from 30,000 to 400,000 YR. "My life is



PHOTOS: Perfume- and incense-maker Anesa Shoai Abdullah Munaseer Al-Domainy used her cash grants to purchase supplies for her business. Since registering with Oxfam, Al-Domainy's profits have multiplied, enabling her to pay her children's school fees. *Naif Rahmah/Oxfam*

better now," she says. "My children have continued their education, and my daughter is studying at university and working to help me provide life essentials for our home."

Though Al-Domainy has caught a whiff of success, ongoing conflict is still an obstacle to her business. During periods

of violence, she cannot venture out to sell her products. Sometimes, she can sell products through a network of family members who can sell where they live. She has also lost business as a result of "the movement of my customers from the district or [their] displacement to other cities."



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