



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

A project for women in East Jerusalem



Women supported by the Latin Patriarchate express their joy after finishing their training and finding a job.

In this period of economic recession in many parts of the world, due to the pandemic, which continues to have a profound impact on the life of our societies, the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre has decided to support the Department of Social Services of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem's initiative encouraging the participation of women in business in East Jerusalem.

"The Latin Patriarchate believes that when women are given the means to express their full potential, everyone benefits," commented Dima Khoury, Patriarchate social worker, who is directly involved in this project which, in recent months, A project for women in East Jerusalem THE ORDER AND THE HOLY LAND has seen several women receive funding to start their own businesses.

"The objective of this initiative is to give these disadvantaged women the opportunity to earn a salary and acquire economic independence by offering them a culturally appropriate context in which they can receive assistance to start a business," continued Dima. The project took a variety of forms: it enabled some women to buy the equipment necessary to launch their activity, while it supported others in the process of training and developing their project.

Four beneficiaries received a donation for equipment: for the purchase of sewing machines, for the machines needed for a pastry business, for a freezer, and for instruments and equipment for a nail bar. Thirteen other women, on the other hand, have taken training courses to prepare for their future work in the fields of make-up, manicure and cooking. Some of these participants have already created profitable small businesses and we hope very much that they will continue on this journey and will soon be joined by their colleagues.

“Our intervention is aimed at women with low or no income, who often do not have the opportunity, qualifications or training to seek traditional employment and who also face difficult challenges because they have young children to raise and family responsibilities,” Dima told us.

Supporting the entrepreneurial activities of these women means encouraging them in their development, their self-esteem and the active contribution they know how to give and are called upon to make to society. You can read two of their stories in the adjacent boxes.

Leila: “I can now cover my family’s needs”

Leila is a mother of three who lives in the Old City of Jerusalem. Her chronically ill husband is unable to work and needs access to regular kidney dialysis after undergoing a transplant. Leila’s three children are all enrolled in private Christian schools, which adds to the household’s financial burden. Leila has always had a passion for cooking and baking and, in particular, for pastry. She struggled for years to make ends meet until she decided to use her talents to start an income-generating business. Before setting up a baking business, Leila took part in a private cookery course, but she lacked the funding for the necessary professional equipment to bake her trademark pastries. The grant provided through this project gave her the opportunity to create a kitchen with modern, professional equipment. Leila now sells her products to local pastry shops and is currently exploring ways to expand her business.

“I can now cover my family’s needs by making pastries and selling them. I do not have to worry about my children going to school or having enough food on the table. I have the LPJ Social Department and the generous donor to thank for my good fortune.”

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Sama: “I thank the generous donors for their support”

Sama is a young mother; she lives in Jerusalem with her husband and three-year-old son. Sama did not have the opportunity to continue with her college education, because she married young and decided to devote her time to her son. Since her childhood, Sama has been fascinated by nail art and she aspired to be a nail artist. Sama’s husband worked in the hospitality sector, and just like the thousands who worked in this industry, he was laid off after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns, when he and his family were forced to survive on unemployment benefits. After an entire year of unprecedented financial hardships, Sama decided to use her passion and talents to generate a steady income to cover the needs of her small family. Thus came the idea to establish a nail art business to fulfill her dream. Sama used the grant she received to purchase the equipment needed for her small nail bar. She has already started her project and has built an impressive customer base through a successful use of social media to promote her work and attract new clients.

“The satisfied looks on my customers’ faces after I have done their nails is very rewarding. It gives me the power and the persistence to keep going. My long-term plan is to expand my business and open my own salon where I can continue doing what I love. I thank the LPJ and the generous donors for their support and for enabling me to believe in myself and for giving me the power to transform my life.”

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