



## SUCCESS STORY

### Om Ali Learns how to sew for the first time in 15 years



Photo: EQUIP1 Yemen

*Summer camps were not only a recreational activity for women and out-of-school girls, but also gave them the opportunity to learn new skills, and helped the USAID funded education project forge bonds with the schools and the communities*

“I never had the chance to go to school when I was a kid” says, Om Ali Abdullah, a 40 year old Yemeni woman. “I don’t even know what a school looks like”, and “my 15 year old daughter, Intisar, had to leave school after the third grade”.

Hearing about the summer camp in Shohada Al-Sabeen School, Om Ali, Intisar, and a number of women from the neighboring villages were very happy to participate. Even though the idea of women participating in any type of school activity was hardly accepted by the men of the community, as it was almost unheard of in their culture. None-the-less, Om Ali and her daughter were determined to participate, especially after hearing about the activities that would help women generate income, such as sewing and handicrafts. She convinced her husband that it would be a group activity, and she would be taking her daughter, along with a number of women from the neighborhood.

Om Ali had a sewing machine that she inherited from her mother, and that had been lying in a corner in her house for more than 15 years; she couldn’t use it, as there was no one to train her.

“Three weeks at summer camp gave me the opportunity to learn how to sew. I will not need a tailor any more. I will practice myself until I am perfect”, says Om Ali.

Intisar also got the chance to learn how to knit table cloths, make quilted pillows, and small purses and handbags from scraps of cloth. She said she will make some things and try to sell them to the women in the neighboring villages. Intisar wished that summer camp activities lasted through out the year, and not just three weeks, because as she says it was her only means of recreation and learning new skills.