

## Remarkable Women



### Can Business Change Society?

Four women from the farming co-operatives of the West Bank in the Occupied Palestinian Territories prove that it can transform the lives of all involved – if there is determined and passionate leadership.



The co-operatives are enabled and supported by The New Farm Company and Oxfam's Enterprise Development Programme.







## DAOUD ISTANBULI and THE NEW FARM COMPANY

“I am Daoud Istanbuli. After I retired from the Ministry of Agriculture I resolved to do what I could to help the small village co-operatives in the food industry of the West Bank. What they lacked, I knew, was access to markets beyond their local villages. The New Farm Company provides that vital missing link.

We offer training, provide quality control, packaging, and marketing for their products. Any profits we make are returned to the owners, who include all the participating co-operatives. I started it in 2000. We are now supported by Oxfam who provide grants and loans to the co-operatives. We have 13 co-operatives at present. Soon, I hope, we will have double the number.”



“I composed this beautiful picture to illustrate the key values in my life. **Olives** have roots that go deep and long-lasting. **A Camel** is the most resilient and patient of animals. **The Pestle and Mortar** signals food, the stuff of life, and of my business. **The Candle** reminds me of my teenage years when I had to study by the light of a candle. It means that you can do anything, no matter how difficult, if you have to, while the **Coffee Cup** symbolizes hospitality, trust and friendship, The Arab virtues.

All these values come together in the **Packet of Thyme**, one of the products of the New Farm Company. Like the olive we aim to keep the farmers rooted to their land, but we and they need the patience of a camel, the determination of the candle, the friendship and trust of that coffee cup, and, of course, it is all about food.”





## MUNA JABER and THE HONEY CO-OPERATIVE

“My name is Muna Jaber. I am the Secretary and Treasurer of this honey co-operative, and was at first the only woman among 42 men. Now there are 3 women, with another 30 who are interested. Sami is the elected Chairman but it really needs a business-minded person like me to run it.

We each look after our own hives, usually on rented land, and sell most of the honey to the New Farm Company. We are now beginning to manufacture our own hives, which we hope to sell to other co-operatives.”





“I am a mother as well as a business woman and a bee-keeper. I had a maths teacher at school who encouraged me a lot. She told me “If you have ambition, don’t stop”. So I don’t!

I have 23 hives at present but I want to increase this to 100 hives and eventually have my own independent business. The honey pays for the education of my children as well as giving me interesting work and dignity.”







## HUDA SHADEED and THE COUSCOUS CO-OPERATIVE

“There are twenty members in the co-operative. I run the local shop, and do all the purchasing, but our main product is couscous, some of which is made on our premises, while twelve members do it at home. Most of it is sold to the New Farm Company, who also helped with our initial training.

I live in a good place and the co-operative provides us with our own social club, but that cannot be enough. We want to prove that together we can control our own destiny”.





“As well as expanding our worlds, the co-operative makes useful money which helps in the home and with the education of our children. I have seven girls - and two boys! I want them to have opportunities that I missed.

My husband agrees. I remember how my own father shaped my life and made me the competent person that I feel I am”.







## DALAL AMRO and THE DIBS CO-OPERATIVE

“My name is Dalal Amro. I started the co-operative six years ago. It now has twenty-four members. It has enhanced my standing in the community, given us all a club of friends and got me out of the house. It has also provided some essential income, although it took two years before we made a profit.

The main product of the co-operative is grape molasses that we call Dibs. In a Muslim country there is no point in making wine so we take the grapes from the local growers and press them to make the molasses. The rest of the year we make cheese and yoghurt with milk from the local farmers.”





“Later I opened a handicraft shop next door to my house, selling handicrafts made and brought to me from the surrounding villages. My dream is to be able to take these products to exhibitions around the world.

My husband does not have a job at the moment, so I am the main breadwinner in the family with nine children. I also have the sheep and hens to look after as well as the Savings and Loan Account that I run for the co-operative. It is a lot of work, but worth it.”







ILHAM MA'MOUN and THE WOMEN'S CO-  
OPERATIVE for RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“My name is Ilham Ma'moun. I am the elected chairperson of the co-operative. Our younger members provide the labour for the New Farm Company, going by bus from our shop. Here I am seen calling up the late-comers.

We also run a shop which sells the New Farm Company products. The money is pooled and I do the accounts at home, usually surrounded by my family”.





“Our families decide together how it should be spent. We have seven children. Some goes to help educate the children, some on useful things like washing machines.

Now that we go out to work our husbands take more responsibility in the home, while we women have more freedom and self-respect”.



# Oxfam's Enterprise Development Programme

Supporting small and growing businesses across the developing world



**Palestine**  
Processed Natural Foods



**Colombia**  
Dairy



**Honduras**  
Vegetables



**Indonesia**  
Vanilla



**Liberia**  
Rice



**Sri Lanka**  
Dairy



**Russia**  
Urban Microfinance



**St Lucia**  
Vegetables



**Ethiopia**  
Sesame



**Tanzania**  
Sisal



**Haiti**  
Dairy



“My name is Hugo Sintes-Pons. I am in charge of this hugely exciting programme which currently operates in eleven of the poorest countries in the world. We plan to increase this portfolio of around thirty enterprises in the near future. Given Oxfam’s global network there is never any shortage of new proposals for our consideration. I’m very grateful to all our supporters who share both their cash and their expertise. If you would like to get involved we would be delighted to hear from you”.



Elizabeth Handy is a distinguished portrait photographer. She has exhibited around the world and published five books of portraits with words by her husband. They include ***The New Alchemists*** and, most recently, ***The New Philanthropists***. [www.LizHandy.net](http://www.LizHandy.net)

Charles Handy's books on the changing shape of work, life and organizations have sold millions around the world. He has been an oil executive, an economist, a professor at the London Business School, the Warden of St. George's House, and Chairman of the Royal Society of Arts.