

Masar Ibrahim Alkhalil – Jordan

Walking a family to life

A Success Story – by Rula El-Jorf



Um Ahmad Packing Taboon Bread – “Souqu El ‘Eid” Local Producers Market

From a village torn by penury comes Um-Ahmad, an ambitious hard working lady, a fighter in her mid forties challenged by her visual impairment, striving to support her family of 7 children and a retired husband suffering from severe illness. Poverty has entered Um-Ahmad’s home in its brutal form, forcing her to get her eldest daughter married at a young age of 15 years old.

Struggling to earn a living in a village constrained by poverty, cultural limitations and lack of opportunity and guidance, API met with Um-Ahmad as she was providing assistance in bread making at one of the fund raising bazaars organized by API. Um-Ahmad from that point was determined to take on what she learnt and create her own little business, baking bread - “Taboon” - at the following fundraising events held. Her talent in cooking attracted the API team to employ Um-Ahmad in preparing meals for tourists walking through the API trail in Ajloun, stopping by Osara, where Um-Ahmad lives for a delicious home-made meal.

This simple stop became a turning point in the life of this family. Um-Ahmad now generates a steady income which enabled her to renovate the dining area at her humble house. Renovations were also made to the washroom, the only washroom in the house, which previously was dysfunctional.



Local Food at Um Ahmad House – Spring Time when all of wild herbs are collected from Ajloun Mountains and cooked fresh.

As you step out of Um-Ahmad's house after the meal, you will come across her pottery work that is displayed for sale. Also for sale are packed and pickled olives that were grown in her small garden.

Um-Ahmad now aims at purchasing the land next to her house to expand her business in producing pickled olives.

The impact of this detour was also reflected on Osara village as a whole. The village has no site of any relevance for touristic attraction, and was therefore unnoticed. By introducing the "food tourism" theme and direct interaction with the local community in Osara, the stop became a must and a unique experience for both the tourist and the host.

Interaction with the guests, exposed Um-Ahmad and her children to the outer world, developed their communication skills to overcome their shyness, pushed them to learn few words in other foreign languages to welcome their guests and provide a warm and hospitable environment.

This impelling experience has brought a thrilling drive to Um-Ahmad, guiding her to constantly improve, and therefore become an icon in her village and an attraction point.

With a grateful heart, Um-Ahmad's words could hardly express her immense feeling of gratitude for all the guidance and training that API provided, but one sentence came out sharp and clear: *"you made me and my family visible in a community that was once ashamed to even look at us".*

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