

مركز الزبير
ZUBAIR SEC



مركز الزبير للمؤسسات الصغيرة
ZUBAIR SMALL ENTERPRISES CENTRE



مؤسسة الزبير | 50 سنة
The Zubair Corporation

A BEACON FOR OMANI ENTREPRENEURS

Featuring
Success
Stories

2016



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Our Message

We are guided by a firm belief that the sustainable development of The Sultanate relies in large part on growing a pool of qualified ambitious young entrepreneurs who start and run small enterprises, and then grow them into thriving and sustainable businesses. These are businesses that go on to provide employment opportunities and help to diversify the national economy and enrich our society as a whole. The work of Zubair SEC feeds into this vision, by providing effective and comprehensive support to enable small enterprises in fulfilling their business endeavours.

Indeed, nurturing and supporting the growth of small enterprises in Oman is inspired by our government's focus on this sector and its adoption of His Majesty's guidance through a number of launched programmes and initiatives. This focus has also inspired our own conviction of the vital role the private sector plays in contributing to the development and progress of

small enterprises and in providing better opportunities for this important sector to grow and flourish in the Sultanate.

Since the launch of Zubair SEC four years ago, we have worked on establishing an ideal environment and eco-system to nurture and support entrepreneurs and owners of small business. The Centre has created a motivating atmosphere for entrepreneurs to innovate and progress while growing their businesses. As such, the Centre has launched a number of initiatives which have contributed in enhancing the entrepreneurial culture in the Sultanate, one of which is the Direct Support Programme which supports promising Omani entrepreneurs who demonstrate good growth potential through their projects. The Programme provides its members opportunities to showcase their capabilities and determination, and with direct support provided by Centre, helps them accelerate the growth of their business, develop their offerings,

and eventually play a role in achieving the desired economic diversification for the country.

At The Zubair Corporation, we are proud of the role Zubair SEC is playing in enabling and establishing successful small businesses led by ambitious promising Omani youth. Every new business adds social and economic value, and demonstrates a journey of perseverance and determination by our members. Every new business also highlights the contribution made to the fabric of our society, whether through new job creation, or by promoting local Omani products and services in the local and foreign markets.

Since establishment, we have been continuously dedicated to develop diverse and innovative support mechanisms for our members. The range of services delivered is guided by a strategy and vision to accelerate the development the sustainability of

these fledgling enterprises, and is achieved by understanding the needs of each member and the goals for their business. With this in mind, the Centre launched a new initiative called "Tajseer" in 2016, which is a business development platform aimed at connecting small businesses and large companies in the Sultanate. The initiative aligns with our belief that it is important for all parties in the private sector – large and small – to build new synergies and seek out new ways of collaboration and mutual cooperation. With the support of Zubair SEC, small businesses get to understand the requirements for obtaining commercial contracts with large companies, and the quality and customer excellence that they need to deliver to sustain such business relations. At the same hand, this initiative helps large companies allocate commended small businesses to assign contracts to, knowing that a qualified support team – Zubair SEC - is putting all effort to equip those small businesses to be up to the market challenges and demand.

The "Tajseer" initiative along with our other programmes and services, helps grow positive competitiveness amongst our members and encourage them to further innovate in their offerings to the market. We hope that large companies and organisations across the nation join this initiative so that we all may achieve our shared goals and create effective fruitful synergies.

The 2016 edition of the Direct Support Programme has continued to evolve, with the addition of two new categories for winning seats in the Programme. For the first time, one of the winning projects was assigned for a joint project with a leading national company: Oasis Logistics. Additionally, for the first time, a winning seat was dedicated for a social enterprise, in line with Zubair SEC's efforts to promote sustainable social impact through business and equip innovative Omani social entrepreneurs.

It is evident that much progress has been made to support entrepreneurs and small businesses across our nation; however, it is clear that much work still needs to be done. To effectively serve young Omanis and further promote a culture of entrepreneurship, we need to double our efforts and increase the levels of cooperation between the various sectors and organisations towards achieving such a noble goal of enabling and maintaining a healthy and sustainable SME sector that we will all be proud of.

I would like to conclude by extending my thanks to all Zubair SEC members, staff, volunteers, and partners, hoping that our collective efforts will help support a positive environment for entrepreneurship to flourish and grow, thus contributing to the growth and prosperity of our wider national economy .



Khalid Muhammad Al Zubair
Managing Director, The Zubair Corporation

Builders of the Future

While Zubair SEC celebrates its fourth year of operation, we are proud of the firm presence that has been established by the Centre in the community, as a beacon that extends support and guidance for small enterprises and entrepreneurs in the Sultanate, towards sustainable and scalable progress and development of their businesses.

Since our inception, more than 450 members have joined Zubair SEC and many more keep joining as we move forward. The members of the Centre are talented and determined entrepreneurs, each of whom has the potential to play a pivotal role in the development of our national economy. This accomplishment is a source of pride for every one of the Zubair SEC team, as many of our members joined us with simple yet promising beginnings; a seed that has been nurtured and mentored over these past few years until it grew, flourished and started sharing remarkable fruits.

Our growing undivided commitment towards the support of local entrepreneurs and owners of small businesses in Oman underscores the vision, mission and aspirations of Zubair SEC. Day by day, and year by year we have been inspired by the guidance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said who has highlighted the profound importance of extending support towards further youth development and enhancing the capabilities of young Omanis to depend on themselves and pave their way towards a greater future in the private sector.

Guided by our strong belief that experience is one of the best ways to knowledge, we have worked on learning by practice and building accumulated knowledge, year on year, in supporting and enabling entrepreneurs through the many journeys we have walked them through. This is how Zubair SEC has developed and its services became diverse and integrated, in order to be the destination for many ambitious

entrepreneurs and owners of small businesses.

We want to emphasize here that our work with our members over the past years have helped us better understand the many challenges facing every entrepreneur during each growth stage of their fledgling business. Such accumulated experiences led us to the result that in the years ahead, entrepreneurs would require more focus and support towards further business development to ensure the continuity and sustainability of their businesses.

This was the driving factor behind the launch of Zubair SEC's recent initiative "Tajseer" – the Arabic word for "Bridging" - in 2016, which aimed at connecting small businesses and large companies in the Sultanate and facilitate collaboration between them towards building business synergies that would be of value to both parties. Such efforts would prove to help mitigate

risk for leading companies who are eager to identify qualified SMEs to assign contracts to, but at times find that objective challenging. By helping identify commended small enterprises-members of Zubair SEC - to large companies, we at Zubair SEC would serve as a facilitator between both stakeholders, while doing what we know best: equipping and guiding those small enterprises to deliver excellence to the market.

This new initiative, adding to the existing "Tajribati" and the "Direct Support Programme" initiatives, proves that we at Zubair SEC do not only work on developing the performance of our members, but also work on continuously developing our entire ecosystem of support and services.

When we look at the outcomes and impact by Zubair SEC so far, we feel pleased that our efforts were put in the right place. The names of many members of Zubair SEC are now very well known in the market, while newer members are striving with full passion to achieve similar excellence through their own determination and the guidance and mentorship provided by the Centre.

Today, as we celebrate the insightful stories of members of the Direct Support Programme in 2016, we affirm our strong determination to continue serving our beautiful nation under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said.



Zubair SEC Services

Since its establishment, Zubair SEC has worked closely with talented young Omanis to nurture and encourage a culture of entrepreneurship across the Sultanate. Combining the spirit of determination and dedication of young entrepreneurs with expert consultancy and mentorship by the Zubair SEC team we have witnessed extraordinary results with fledgling enterprises and we believe remarkable success can be achieved.

To achieve such shared objectives, the Centre established a comprehensive ecosystem for support and guidance which develops the entrepreneurial spirit, provides the necessary consultations, and helps members get beyond their tentative first steps in business, towards further growth and prosperity. In return, every member of the Centre is required to commit with their determination, dedication and willingness to learn. The ecosystem of services at Zubair SEC includes the following areas:

Business Advisory and Capacity Building

Zubair SEC offers a broad line-up of experienced high-calibre specialised advisors from inside and outside the Sultanate, some working full time in the centre and others volunteering part time to contribute with their expertise and knowledge towards the development and support of Zubair SEC members. Much of the centre's work focuses on support, expert consultancy and mentorship; services that are vital to support young entrepreneurs. Our business advisory sessions offer direct consultancy and guidance, building sound business strategies, feasibility studies, business plans, performance evaluation, and identifying key business requirements from the pre-establishing phase, to the launching phase which should comply with rules and regulations.

Our advisors also support in putting market penetration, competition, and financial plans, as well as setting investment

resources needed for business expansion, and the organisational structure and human resources management systems needed.

The Centre also holds workshops and programmes related to different aspects of running a business, with the aim of enhancing the administrative and management skills of its members and equipping them with state of the art tools and best practices.

Serviced Offices

The Centre provides its members with modern fully equipped offices located at Bait Al Zubair. While using the premises, members can enjoy a supportive and motivating environment and get to work alongside our team of experienced consultants and mentors. The Centre also provides other value-added services including conference rooms and various communication facilities.

Partners

Throughout the past years, Zubair SEC has signed a number of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and scopes of collaboration with different organisations from the public and private sectors. These MoUs, along with companies within the Zubair Group, have established a strong base of strategic partners that Zubair SEC members can benefit from in business development. The Zubair SEC list of partners include a number of financial, consultancy, and logistics institutions, as well as other private sector companies and public sector organisations interested in supporting entrepreneurs in Oman.

Finance

The Centre provides its members with financial plans and facilitation through a number of its local financial strategic partners. Additionally, as part of its endeavour to elevate competitiveness among its members, Zubair SEC selects excellent members every year to join its Direct Support Programme and gain additional specialised services as well as special financial grants.

Direct Support Programme

The fundamental goal of the Zubair SEC Direct Support Programme is to enhance positive competitiveness among its members and give a growth boost to members who have good potential for growth and scaling up. The Programme rewards members who demonstrate commitment towards success and dedication in practically applying the consultancy and advice provided to them by the Centre. To be eligible for entry into the Direct Support Programme, member's businesses need to demonstrate sound strategic planning, realistic feasibility studies and the ability to apply best practice business administration measures.

Every year, Zubair SEC selects qualified members to join the Direct Support Programme and benefit from its advisory services and guidance, while at the same time receiving financial grant that helps them in achieving the business objectives agreed upon with the advisors.

Although Zubair SEC provides advisory services and support to all members, either directly or indirectly through its partners' network, only an exclusive number of members gain entry each year to the Direct Support Programme, an approach which is intended to create a positive atmosphere of competition progress amongst its members.

What are the criteria to select the winners of the Programme?

The Direct Support Programme entry criteria are wide-ranging and focus on the personality of the nominee, their motivation and ability to innovate. Additionally, their product/service specifications are key criteria when considering the overall competitiveness towards the Programme. Member's business plans, financial forecasts, and their overall social impact are also key selection criteria.

A Dynamically Developing Programme

Every year the Centre seeks to evolve with the Direct Support Programme. In its second round in 2015, the Zubair SEC added social impact to the selection criteria for winners of the Programme. Since then, a number of members have been selected for their projects which had significant social value and community merit. This theme was developed further in 2016, as we will see in the coming pages of the book, when the Centre dedicated one of the winning seats for a social enterprise. The second development in 2016 came from boosting partnerships between large corporations and members of the Direct Support Programme, by dedicating a winning seat for a joint business opportunity supported by one of the leading institutions in Oman. A prime example of this new approach is Oasis Logistics who adopted the first winner of the programme for the joint project "Biladi Mart" in 2016.



“Tajribati” Initiative

With the ever increasing number of entrepreneurs who are joining the Centre, Zubair SEC has become a great platform for communication and collaboration, giving every member the opportunity to meet, discuss, learn from others’ experiences, and grow in business. In this regard, the Centre launched “Tajribati” initiative in 2015 which allows SMEs, members and non-members alike, to attend a monthly general discussion session, attended by entrepreneurs and people of expertise from various public and private organisations. The initiative allows entrepreneurs to discover various opportunities to

develop their business and learn best practices that help improve management practices. “Tajribati” – the Arabic word for “My Experience” - is an on-going initiative that provides a podium for young entrepreneurs to share their experiences, stories and insight in a friendly transparent atmosphere moderated by the team of advisors at Zubair SEC.





“Tajseer” Initiative



The real success of an entrepreneur or small business is marked by stability, long-term sustainability and profitability, and indeed the initial success of any new enterprise can often founder before it grows into a fully mature business. Keeping this in mind, Zubair SEC sought to empower its members to take their business to the next level and position them for a sustainable future. Zubair SEC launched the “Tajseer” initiative which is a business development platform aimed at bridging between small businesses and large companies in the Sultanate to enable entrepreneurs to find opportunities

for developing their businesses with some of the leading companies in Oman. The initiative offers an opportunity to network between representatives and decision makers of both sides, in a way that could result in positive outcomes for all. In this regard, Zubair SEC is devoting its efforts and various tools to create this cooperation and, at the same time, working closely with its members to ensure their readiness in matter of quality, professionalism, customer excellence, and production and service capacity to meet the needs of large companies and to build strong and enduring relations.

We thank the leading companies that participated in the first release of “Tajseer” initiative

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Members of the Direct Support Programme

Arej Al-Heimli: Despite the fact that he joined entrepreneurship purely by coincidence, Odaï Khamis Al-Dahmani from Al Rustaq, manages a growing business “Arej Al-Humaili”, which has completed a number of high-profile projects in design and interior décor.

Al-Shumookh Engineering Consulting: Jokha Al Husaini believes that the reputation of her business and the quality of provided services is key to her success. Her ambition is to be one of the leading engineering consulting companies in Oman. Her dream is not impossible as Al-Shmookh is now a very well-known company in the Sultanate.

Meshan: The hard work and determination of Al-Jabri sisters to establish a business specialised in sweets made of the best Omani dates has been a real success story. Meshan, known for its high quality products and services, has expanded their

offerings to include a coffee shop and catering services for different occasions.

Huroof: Iman Mohammed Al-Farsi has excelled in overcoming various challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, such as balancing between personal responsibilities and professional ambitions. Iman is a mother of two kids and today she is the owner of a growing accessories brand named “Huroof”.

Motorsport Solutions: Ali Mousa Al Mousa not only has a great passion for cars; he is today the owner of the Motorsport Solutions centre, which provides specialized high quality car customization and maintenance services.

Mazayen: Her passion towards heritage and her artistic talent combined with her deep sense of beauty were her tools to become a silversmith, creating products that combine Omani

authenticity and modernity. Nadia Al-Shamsi silver works are one of the most sought after silver works among Omani ladies and tourists today.

Memories Studio: This is one of the well-known names in professional photography in Oman. Yaser Shaban, owner of Memories Studio wanted to document memories in a way that makes you feel proud, and he beautifully succeeded.

Uniboats: Adel Suwaid Al Abri’s passion with sea made him establish one of the fast growing Omani companies specialised in marine tourism and water sport activities - Uniboats. Adil has expanded his business to cover larger segments in the market and is focused on providing unique and high quality services, including corporate programmes and events within the same domain.



Arab Adventurers: Amer Khalfan Al Rawahi learned the secrets of the tourism business through sheer hard work. After a few years of working various jobs in the sector, he established his own company, which offers tourism services in the Sultanate, and became one of the outstanding companies, attracting large numbers of tourists every year.

White Hands Centre for Assistive Technology and Rehabilitation: The challenges we face in our lives often lead us on the path to success. Aisha Alawi Baabood is a mother of a differently-abled child. Therefore, she established one of the best rehabilitation Centres in Oman, a social enterprise that stands out with its quality services.

Jana’en Al Hamra’ Private School: Investing in education means investing in human resources. Kadhia Hamad Al Nabhani, the founder of Jana’en Al Hamra Private School,

believes in providing quality education that achieves academic and social progress simultaneously.

Dar Al-Khaboora for Silver Crafting: Recognised as one of the outstanding silver crafting houses, not only in Oman but in GCC as well, Mahfoodha Ahmed Al Belushi inherited this art from her grandparents, and preserved the craft for future generations through most attractive designs and deliverables.

Kidani: Dar Al Wwasha Trade “Kidani” produces exquisite silver jewellery, including gold painted silver. Through her unique creativity and efforts, Muna Hamad Al Khusaibi has now taken her brand beyond Oman and into regional markets.

Raneem Jalan: This is one of the distinguished businesses for selling women and children wear and accessories and producing cosmetics in Wilayat Ja’laan Bani Bu Hasan. In

a short period of time the business has generated income for a growing segment of local women in a number of villages, due to the deep believe of the business owner Najlaa Bilal Al Shekaili in the importance of enabling local communities through business.

Velvet Touch: There are numerous imported and locally made skincare products in the market; however, what many of these products lack is the personal touch and customization; this is the unique approach of “Velvet Touch”, the brainchild of Nasra Yasir Al Maamari.

Envoldeal: After he launched the first Omani envelop printing house, Yousef Thani Al Jabri provided an excellent alternative to imported envelopes. His printing house provides high-quality locally made envelopes while guaranteeing efficient services and speed of delivery.



Members
of the
Direct
Support
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2016



Emaar Al Khaleej
Abdullah Ali Al Mulla

Fresh graduates from university or college tend to favor job opportunities in the public and private sectors, and many people often wait for months or even years until they get a job offer that satisfies their aspirations or fulfills their needs. However, Abdullah Ali Al Mulla chose a completely different way; he aspired to become an entrepreneur starting his own business, instead of working in a steady job and getting a monthly salary. Firm in his conviction, as soon as he graduated from college with his bachelor's degree, he launched his private company "Emaar Al Khaleej".

Recalling the beginnings of his new business, Abdullah Al Mulla notes, "When I was a university student at the International College of Engineering and Management, my major was Environmental Health and Safety Engineering. During the course of my studies I felt a very strong connection with this field, so I started researching more about it which strengthened my

passion for the domain. After graduating I became more certain that what I learnt would form the basis of my first business; one which specializes in fire safety and security systems."

Armed with his bachelor's degree, Abdullah carefully studied the demand of the local market for this type of business and saw a good opportunities in the field, which encouraged him to enter the market. Commenting on the challenges facing the new business, Abdullah noted: "The decision to start my own business may not seem hard, but at the same time, it required the availability of a number of factors to ensure the success of the project. Therefore, when I studied the market, I found many good opportunities in front of me, but they were not necessarily easy to get. Although I had a relevant degree and had conducted deep research on security, safety, and fire protection systems, I lacked administrative and management experience. Also, big challenges require a person who is patient, experienced, and

well-rounded on other matters like marketing and promotion, in addition to the availability of capital, of course. However, with courage and determination to achieve my aspiration of running my own enterprise, I took my first steps into the business world".

The business "Emaar Al Khaleej" was founded in 2014, and focused on all activities related to fire prevention systems, in addition to providing security and safety equipment for buildings and work sites. The business started with Abdullah Al Mulla and only one employee; in two years, the number of employees reached 30, which reflects the development and fast growth of the enterprise.

Commenting on the rapid expansion of the business, Abdullah notes: "When we launched the business, we were aware of the need in the market for such specialized products and services, but we also learnt how difficult it is to compete in a

small market against big companies working in the same field. Therefore, we had to study the market very well and determine the needs of clients accurately, in addition to focusing on what makes us different from other competitors and delivering that to the clients clearly. The most important message we delivered to our clients at first was that our company is the only one that has an Omani administration whose members are specialized and academically qualified in this field, because specialized activities require specialized competencies too. This clear point of differentiation was leverage for us with governmental institutions, private sector companies, and individuals, which reflected positively in the rapid growth of the business."

By the end of 2015, Abdullah Al Mulla joined the membership at Zubair SEC. Highlighting the benefits of joining Zubair SEC Abdullah notes: "Our business grew very rapidly, and in a short period of time. While this was very pleasing, it highlighted areas in the business where we needed expert consultancy and mentorship to ensure the long-term sustainability and continued growth of the business. The benefits I received from Zubair SEC were invaluable. I received expert consultations, attended workshops on developing the performance of small enterprises and met with other members of the Centre to share experiences and insight. Along the way, I formed close relations with the other members and we continue to collaborate on good business opportunities till today."

In 2016, Abdullah Al Mulla applied for the Direct Support Program. Due to the well-studied selling propositions of

his business, his seriousness as an entrepreneur looking for excellence, and his dedication towards constant improvement, the Centre selected him to be one of the ten winners of the Direct Support Program for that year. Commenting on the award, Abdullah noted: "Winning membership within the Direct Support Programme was a paradigm shift for me and my business, and this accomplishment has really opened new doors of opportunity for me. I am thankful for the efforts of the entire team at Zubair SEC who played a key role in the development of my business and helped me prepare and develop my detailed business plans. I also received a financial grant which helped me buy new tools and equipment to grow the business, and I still enjoying the comprehensive consultancy and guidance services extended by the specialized team of advisers there."

Abdullah Almulla is a man of unlimited ambition. He plans to take "Emaar Al Khaleej" outside the Sultanate to other markets; he notes: "Our ambitions are very big because we are planning for the long term. We hope to become one of the best 5 Omani companies working in this field by 2020. In the coming years, we also aim to establish a factory here in Oman to produce products related to security, firefighting and safety. The establishment of this factory will lead us to the stage of exporting our products and providing our services in foreign markets."

Guided by the confidence of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos in the ability of Omani youth to contribute to the growth of the

national economy, Abdullah Al Mulla keeps working hard towards improving his business. He says: "The wise vision of His Majesty for Omani youth and his strong confidence in them always encourages us to prove that we are worthy of his trust. In addition, His Majesty's guidance constantly supports Omani youth and start-ups so that they have a bigger role in the growth of the national economy of our beloved country." He adds: "I would like to thank Zubair SEC for its unlimited support for this sector and me personally, and I hope that big companies in the Sultanate do likewise because Omani youth are the future of Oman and they deserve every support."



Emaar Al Khaleej



Efreez
Yasir Shamis Al Battashi /Mohammed Ali Al Balushi

A close and enduring friendship between two friends formed the foundation for a new beginning when the pair decided to become business partners and establish their first company. The first choice was to establish a company specialised in providing design consultancy and décor. Yasir Al Battashi and Mohammed Al Balushi are the founders of Efreez since 2011.

They both brought different, yet complimentary skills to the new enterprise; Yasir has experience in administration and finance as well as good experience in maintenance, while Mohammed is an M.A. holder in fine arts, and works as an arts specialist.

Commenting on the beginnings of their new business, Yasir noted: “My friendship with Mohammed motivated both of us to consider establishing a joint business. Usually finding the suitable commercial activity forms a challenge to anyone who wishes to start a business, but for us the choice was clear from

the very beginning. Mohammed is a very talented artist and he also holds an M.A in fine arts. Therefore, we capitalized on our expertise and established Efreez, which provides specialized services in wood and glass design, and designing special lighting solutions, among other design works. We started in 2011, and in the beginning it was only Mohammed and myself, and we worked out of a small office in Al-Amerat. At first, we focused on providing design services to small villa owners in Al-Amerat only, then as the business grew we began to provide services to customers all over Muscat and to some governmental bodies. Our business developed day by day, and now we have 20 employees in the company.”

Yasir and Mohammed realized that the revenue growth and the increased work volume must be paralleled by an increase in profits. However, due to the increase in operating expenses, the net profit was less than the expected. Therefore, they looked

for consultancy support and expert mentorship to develop their business. Through social media, they heard about Zubair SEC and its role in supporting small enterprises and Omani entrepreneurs, so they decided to register as members at the Centre, which was a significant step for them. The consultancy and advice received from Zubair SEC advisors contributed in developing the business strategy of the company, and the positive financial results quickly followed.

“After the growth in company’s business as well as number of employees, we realized that we needed expert advice from a specialized institution to put us on the right path, and drive the business towards wider horizons of success. At the beginning the focus was on developing and diversifying our work without the need to add extra expense which in turn might affect the net profit. The team at Zubair SEC helped us to develop a new strategy which covered the following key areas; developing

and expanding our range of services, identifying the ideal target customer, increasing the target audience, reducing unnecessary expenses, and changing the marketing and promotional strategy for the company. We worked together to implement all these points.” Yasir added.

Efreez started reaping the fruits of joining Zubair SEC, with Yasir Al-Battashi and Mohammed Al Balushi successfully implementing the new strategy with great results. The company started providing an expanded range of services, and grew its customer base to include commercial services to public and private institutions. The excellent potential within their business was a major factor in them being selected for the 2016 Direct Support Programme.

Yasir Al Battashi commented: **“After we joined Zubair SEC, and implemented the new strategy, we started to see positive results. We established good relationships with strategic partners of Zubair SEC, and the continuous engagement with other members enabled us to exchange experience and look for possible cooperation opportunities.** Winning entry to the Direct Support Programme 2016 gave the company a real boost, along with all the privileges provided by the Programme. In addition to the free expert consultancy provided to all members, the winners get a number of unique privileges, including a dedicated consultant who works with them to provide support, in addition to a financial grant, which contributes toward implementing the agreed objectives for the business”.

He added: “Through our work with the team at Zubair SEC, we developed the administrative, financial and other aspects of the business. Our office has been relocated from Al Amerat to Al Khuwair, with the aim to elevate and expand our customer base. We also focused on growing our relationships with engineering companies, which allowed us to offer a greater range of specialized services, and increase the volume of business we can handle. The Zubair SEC team worked closely with us to develop a business plan for years ahead, and prepare a new marketing and business development strategy, in addition to preparing a new brand identity for the company.”

Al Battashi concludes, “After the great efforts made by everyone at Zubair SEC, we were able to take our business to the next level. Today, we are working with a new vision and goals, targeting a larger market. At the beginning, we were providing our service to small villa owners, those who are with average income and below, but today our services are provided to a higher-income segment in the society. With the various services provided, we are now working with high-end shops and hotels. This change in our business strategy contributed in raising the revenue by %90, keeping in mind that we have the same number of employees and with the same expenses, but the profit has doubled. Thanks to everyone at Zubair SEC for their tireless support, and I encourage all SME owners to take advantage of the services and consultancy provided by the Centre.”





Biladi Mart Wholesale Supermarket
Nasir Said Muhammed Al Hajri

Nasir Said Al Hajri is from the Wilayat of Bidiyah in North Aṣṣharqiyah Governorate. He is a partner in the business “Modern Nature World” which specializes in the sale of nuts, coffee beans, sweets and spices. He saw the Direct Support Programme as a golden opportunity to develop his business which is considered a small-sized enterprise. Therefore, he registered for membership at Zubair SEC. Al Hajri is an avid follower of the Centre’s news and updates and he is very impressed by its efforts in encouraging small enterprises to grow and develop.

Commenting on the association with the Centre, Nasir notes: “Zubair SEC is one of the most popular bodies that ambitious small enterprises head to. The Centre works in a very unique way to make small businesses stable and strong, while providing them with the foundations and pillars for sustainability and growth. The Zubair SEC team works alongside the small

business owner through every phase of growth and provides expert consultancy and mentorship to members to help manage and market the business in the best way possible. In addition, each year, the Centre chooses a group of ten members who are keen to develop their business, and who have demonstrated their professionalism and commitment; chosen members become accepted into the Zubair SEC’s flagship Direct Support Programme.”

In 2015, Zubair SEC announced a seat in the Direct Support Programme to be adopted by a leading company in the Sultanate. This is in line with The Zubair Corporation’s strategy towards enhancing the role of large corporates in collaboration with small enterprises to develop their mutual business hand in hand. The first initiative was adopted by Oasis Logistics which is specialized in the wholesale arena.

This announcement was the biggest encouragement for Nasir Al Hajri to join Zubair SEC. He did not wait long because he knows the value of time and how important it is to take advantage of the opportunity given specifically to small enterprises; therefore, he applied for membership at Zubair SEC in 2015. Nasir had worked in trading for several years, and although experienced, he knew he needed expert guidance and advice as much as he needs financial support in order to grow his business. His determination and will to succeed impressed the supervisors of the Direct Support Programme and after careful evaluation, they worked to partner Nasir with “Oasis Logistics”. This was the starting point for “Biladi Mart” business in Wilayat Bidiyah, which was launched in 18 July 2016 under the auspices of Hani Muhammad Al Zubair, Director, The Zubair Corporation & Chairman, Zubair Automotive Group.

With the opening of the new business, Nasir Al Hajri’s dream

came true. He says, “As soon as it was announced that our enterprise was accepted into the Direct Support Programme, and to partner with “Oasis Logistics”, the Zubair SEC team started working on preparing the supermarket’s design, identity, brand, business plan, all the logistics related to its financial and commercial management affairs, and daily operations management in cooperation with Oasis Logistics. It was a great opportunity for Modern Nature World Company to manage the first “Biladi Mart” supermarket in cooperation with Zubair SEC and Oasis Logistics”.

“We really benefitted from the financial assistance to help fund the setup, in addition to other assistance received from Oasis Logistics, who were helpful in the preparation and fit-out of the new supermarket. More importantly, and apart from the financial support, we received expert consultancy and mentorship from Zubair SEC and Oasis Logistics, including technical, marketing, and logistical support before, during, and after the opening. That support is still provided today by the advisors and staff at Zubair SEC”, Nasir added.

Nasir notes that the business is constantly adding to the range of products on sale and is attracting new customers every day. However, as with any new enterprise, there are challenges and obstacles on the path to success. Nasir commends the efforts of Zubair SEC for providing complete support for entrepreneurs and small enterprises, which he relates to as a great experience.

He notes that Zubair SEC is a model other leading companies should look to when supporting the rapidly growing SME sector and helping to grow the national economy in Oman. Commenting on his experience, Nasir notes, “Zubair SEC has directly contributed to the growth of entrepreneurship in Oman, helping to establish and grow small businesses that create new job opportunities. The Centre is the door to the world of business, because through it, entrepreneurs can achieve their goals supported by expert consultancy, guidance, training and financial support, which makes them capable and ready to face any challenge. Oasis Logistics is also a great example for partnership and cooperation between leading enterprises and start-ups. We thank them all and really appreciate their efforts.”

This project is an initiative by Oasis Logistics



Biladi Mart Wholesale Supermarket



Al Rawaye Al Shamikha
Aliya Abdullah Al Nabhani

Aliya is a successful housewife who felt the need to play a larger role in society and develop a sustainable source of income for herself and her family. Thinking deeply of her ambitions, she struck upon the concept for her new enterprise, one she felt confident she could successfully establish and manage. Aliya shared her vision of the new business with her husband and he too was excited about it and promised to stay by her side and provide all the support she needs to succeed in her entrepreneurial dream. She is Aliya Abdullah Al Nabhani, the owner of Al Rawaye Al Shamikha poultry farm.

Aliya lives in the Wilayat of Nizwa. In 2013, she founded her own business which was a small traditional poultry barn that produced around 3,000 chickens a year. She oversaw the construction of the barn on her father-in-law's farm and very quickly the demand for her locally produced chickens outstripped the supply. Recognising the unprecedented demand in the local

market, Aliya decided to expand the business and transform it from a small barn operation to a fully commercially sized farm, increasing the number of barns for chicken production.

Commenting on the expansion of her business, Aliya Al Nabhani says, "I decided to expand breeding capacity and rented a farm in Al Karsha region in the Wilayat of Nizwa. I built two large barns which were able to produce around 5,000 chickens during one season. Traditionally, the breeding season lasts for nearly two months which is the period the chicken spends to grow, starting from the time when the eggs hatch, to the age in which the bird is mature. With this expansion, the business reached a total annual production of around 30,000 chickens. In the beginning, our farm served the Wilayat of Nizwa only, then we started delivering our products to the Wilayat of Al Hamra and the Wilayat of Bahla. We deliver the chicken slaughtered and cleaned to the houses without adding delivery

fees on the actual price. In fact, recently we started delivering orders to the Muscat Governorate, especially to relatives and friends in some parts of the capital."

Witnessing the huge demand for the business' poultry products, Aliya believed it was necessary to expand the business even more to satisfy market demand, but given the rapidly growing size of operations, she felt the need for specialized technical advice and financial support in order to expand in an organized manner. Aliya understood that expert advice will ensure the growth of her business and increase revenue, which is needed to fund her expansion plans. It is at this point that Aliya sought out the support of Zubair SEC, where she registered as a member to benefit from expert consultancy services.

Commenting on joining hands with the Zubair SEC team, Aliya Al Nabhani noted: "When I started the poultry farm the

production quickly reached around 30,000 chickens annually. The demand kept growing and I decided to further expand the business and increase production, but the expansion costs were very high and existing revenues could barely cover it. This is a hard position to be in; our business was a great success, but we were struggling to fund the future expansion plans. Therefore, I thought about obtaining expert advice on how to increase revenues to fund our planned expansion. In 2015, I applied for the membership of Zubair SEC. A good friend recommended Zubair SEC to me, as she had been previously accepted into the Direct Support Programme offered by the Centre. After I became a member at the Centre I benefitted from many valuable consultations which helped me plan the business expansion. Then, I applied for entry into the 2016 Direct Support Programme and by Allah's will I was one of the winners."

By winning membership into the Direct Support Programme, many doors for development and growth were opened for Aliya's business. The services she received included a comprehensive financial audit, which confirmed that existing revenues were unfavourable compared to planned expenditures. In this stage, there was a need to restructure in order to achieve higher revenues without adding expenditure. After several business studies and plans, Aliya and the Zubair SEC team recommended adding a third barn to her operations, allowing for higher production of chicken without resulting

in significant additional expenditure. The expansion of the third poultry barn was primarily funded by the Direct Support Programme grant.

Aliya says: **"Winning membership in the Direct Support Programme 2016 opened broad horizons for real success in my business, and I say real success because the business was successful regarding the demand for our product, but it was not ideal regarding profitability. After many meetings and consultations, the Zubair SEC team suggested directing the programme grant towards constructing a third poultry barn which was much bigger and uses modern systems.** The barn was constructed according to modern standards unlike the previous traditional barns. The new barn is thermally insulated which reduces electricity consumption and can be transferred from one place to another if needed. It also has the modern automated irrigation system which reduces water consumption, in addition to a very modern heating system which maintains a consistent temperature degree inside the barn throughout the year."

The third barn now produces around 36,000 chickens annually, and as a result, the overall production of the farm from the three barns has now reached nearly 66,000 chickens each year, which contributes in generating higher revenue while fixed primary expenditures, like the farm rent price, did not change.

In addition to Aliya Al Nabhani and Zubair SEC working on adding the third poultry barn, the Centre also worked on preparing a modern new identity for the enterprise, choosing a unique name for the business, and preparing a new logo to enable more effective marketing.

Talking about her future plans, Aliya says, "I thank god for helping me achieve my ambition. Thanks to the great support of the whole Zubair SEC team I was able to see my business growing further and further. I would like to deeply thank everyone in the Centre for their great support and efforts, and I have a big vision that my business will all cover parts of the Sultanate and then we aim to start exporting our products to other Gulf countries."



Shubbak
Ayub Saleh Khalifa Al-Shueli

Ayub Saleh Khaifa Al-Shueli is the founder of a new and unprecedented business concept in Oman. Considering the large number of weddings and events held in the Sultanate every week, Ayub believed that the market would greatly benefit from a platform that brings together the biggest number of events services, including venue options, and event services like catering, AV equipment hire and entertainment options. After an initial feasibility study was completed, the platform www.shubbak.om was launched to provide customers with information about available venues and halls, while allowing reservation enquiries and booking confirmations all to be completed within the site. The all-new platform also includes other relevant services like fashion, beauty care, photography, and catering.

Commenting on the philosophy of Shubbak platform, which is under the umbrella of Shubbak Technology Solutions,

Ayub Al-Shueli, noted: “Managed by talented young Omanis, Shubbak provides comprehensive services for the booking of weddings and function halls throughout the Sultanate. The management of the “Shubbak” website is committed to give our customers a unique experience with fast and convenient services, professionalism and excellent value.”

Ayub added: “High prices are one of the major challenges for those who are looking to book a hall for any occasion, and delivering greater value was what inspired me to start this new platform. The site was originally launched in February 2015, and we faced a number of hurdles at the beginning, but with our strong determination and hard work we were able to achieve our initial objectives for the platform. Over time we were able to convince all of major halls to register their information on our site including price, special offers, booked dates, and available dates. Initially, we also faced a challenge regarding people’s

attitude towards booking halls and venues through a website, but the situation has changed gradually. Today, two years after our launch, we have 25 halls in Muscat, Al-Batinah and Al-Dakhiliya Governorates registered on the website. We are in the process of communicating with more halls and farms to register on the site, and we hope to cover all areas of Oman soon.

Looking for professional support and guidance to further grow his business, Ayub approached Zubair SEC following the advice of a friend. He subsequently registered, and in less than a year became one of the active and engaged members of the Centre. Highlighting his experience with Zubair SEC, Ayub noted: “When I applied to join Zubair SEC, I was really looking for expert consultancy and mentorship rather than financial support. I wanted to fully develop and grow my business. Once I joined the Centre I received their full support with expert

consultancy, advice and guidance. Through the sessions held we discussed ways of developing the business, and the best ways to reach larger numbers of our target audience.”

In 2016, due to his sincere efforts in developing his business, Ayub was selected as member of Zubair SEC Direct Support Program. The extended financial grant, together with the expert consultancy and guidance contributed in boosting growth for Shubbak. The business has since grown in the range of complementary services provided, including fashion for men and women, music and entertainment options, hair and beauty, custom invitations, photography, decoration, hospitality, event management, sweets, halls setup, flowers, and comprehensive catering services.

Zubair SEC team worked closely with Ayub Al-Shueli to design a smart phone app for the Shubbak platform, where users can book or inquire for any services through their smartphones. Highlighting the benefits of being selected as one of the ten winners of the Direct Support Programme Ayub noted: “Being selected for the Direct Support Programme in 2016 was a real turning point for the business. The new mobile app will facilitate the booking process, and we have added 25 registered halls and 54 related service providers for weddings, conferences, and meetings. We are also in communication with other reputable service providers to register on our site and promote their services. Our aim is to make Shubbak a-one-stop-platform for event organisers and individuals alike. Through Shubbak, one may book the hall, pay the costs, book

restaurants and buffets, agree with hospitality and events management companies, gift shops, and photographers. One may also change the date of booking or cancel booking before a period of time and according to the defined conditions for every booking separately.”

Ayub Al-Shueli believes that any business can develop and grow if it receives the right support, advice and guidance, which is exactly what he experienced after joining Zubair SEC. He noted: **“Many young Omanis have the ideas that may be developed into successful businesses, but it depends on the quality of support provided, both financially and technically. I was privileged to join Zubair SEC where I received free guidance, consultancy and advice. Winning the financial grant helped me to develop my business even further. I am grateful to The Zubair Corporation and Zubair SEC for their tireless support from the very first day. We wish that other big companies in the private sector follow the same path to serve our beloved country. The growth of SMEs is a growth for our national economy.”**





Al Qabas Dental Centre
Zubaida Hamood Abdullah Al Harthy

Every one of us has a wish or an ambition and understands the need to work hard to achieve it. In this story we will highlight a determined and hardworking individual who has applied her talents and expertise to achieve her ambition. Over a period of fifteen years, she continued working hard until she saw her dream become a reality. Our story is about Zubaida Hamood Al Harthy, Co-Founder of Al Qabas Dental Centre, and the CEO of the centre.

Zubaida tells the story of her success with pride, and stresses that every dream can be achieved if there is a strong determination. Zubaida notes, “My passion towards the dentistry profession was my drive for establishing a private dental clinic. The business was an idea a long time in the making, and at certain stages I faced many challenges and obstacles. However, with my belief in my capabilities to achieve my dream, I continued working hard and in 2012 the idea started to take shape and

become a reality. I started doing research and talking to friends and colleagues regarding the feasibility for of the business model, the best location, and the anticipated costs, among other issues.”

“In 2014, I drew the first steps of the project together with my partner Sheikha Hamad Al-Jabriyah who shared the same ambition to run our own practice. The name of the clinic “Al Qabas Dental Centre” was selected to reflect strength, and highness. We also designed the identity in which we focused on highlighting the vision, message, and main goals of the clinic.” she added.

In May 2014, Zubaida joined Zubair SEC where she attended workshops and sessions focusing on entrepreneurship and developing businesses from the start-up stage. During her membership period at Zubair SEC, Zubaida gained expert

consultancies, advice and guidance regarding founding and growing a business and preparing a proper business plan for growth. Commenting on her membership at the Centre, Zubaida said, “**Choosing to join Zubair SEC was one of the important decisions I have made, and their team really helped me a lot in establishing my first business. At Zubair SEC I learnt the basics of proper planning for business success, as well as developing sound marketing plans.**”

Zubaida reaped the fruits of her hard work and intensive efforts by launching “Al Qabas Dental Centre” in 2015. The specialized dental centre provides modern treatment services through latest dental equipment and technologies available in the industry. The centre also includes an equipped hall dedicated for lectures and workshops in the dental and other medical fields.

Zubaida continues, “In order to establish a successful project, I applied for funding from the Oman Development Bank, and they provided me with %50 of the capital, while my partner Sheikha Al-Jabriya invested the other %50 of the capital needed. In order to ensure that the business is well planned and setup, I signed a contract with an advisor who is specialized in dental field to help me and guide me in selecting the best equipment and supplies as well as the most highly trained staff. After that, I started looking for the best location, which was Al-Hail. The following step was buying equipment and tools and start the implementation process and preparation of the clinic. I have directly supervised all the details. The official opening of the Centre was in June 2nd, 2016, under the auspices of Khalid Muhammad Al-Zubair, Managing Director of The Zubair Corporation.”

Al Qabas Dental Centre started operation with a team of 4 qualified and experienced employees. Zubaida Al Harthy has an experience of 23 years as a Dental technician, and she had previously worked for 15 years in sterilization. The principle dentist has an experience of 7 years and the two qualified Omani nurses enjoy a good experience.

Commenting on being accepted into the Zubair SEC Direct Support Programme, Zubaida noted: “**The direct support programme really increased my chances for success as well as my determination in driving the project towards excellence. It also increased the responsibility of Al Qabas Dental Centre Team to exert more efforts towards achieving**

objectives and continued success. On the financial side, the grant by the programme helped us in buying some of the equipment needed for the Centre such as ray device as well as other dental equipment. We have also completed decoration works at the reception.”

Zubaida’s ambition is to develop her business by increasing treatment services, purchase additional dental equipment, and open other branches of the clinic. She regularly conducts marketing outreach to promote the clinic by participating in exhibitions and visiting schools and institutions while providing free dental check-ups and raising awareness of the importance of mouth and teeth health. She has also signed agreements with large enterprises to provide treatment to employees with reduced rates. Zubaida also makes use of social media to promote the clinic.

Zubaida believes that entrepreneurship is a long journey which needs thoughtful planning, preparation and determination. Anyone willing to be an entrepreneur needs to be psychologically strong and socially ready, in addition to attending specialized workshops to develop their leadership skills. Entrepreneurs need to be patient and knowledgeable with the requirements of the project and the possible challenges, in addition to the importance of interacting with other entrepreneurs to share ideas and experiences.



مركز القبس لطب الأسنان
ALQABAS DENTAL CENTER

Al Qabas Dental Centre



Khamis Rashid Khamis Al Sawaii Projects
Khamis Rashid Al Sawaii

Khamis Rashid Khamis Al Sawaii is a shining example of an entrepreneur who is working to achieve his dream with professionalism, dedication and ambition. The journey to success is not easy, as difficulties and obstacles often lay ahead; challenges which would discourage many from pursuing their own dream. However, Khamis has very clear goals and a clear vision for success, and he is well on the way to achieve his goals.

During an overseas trip, a novel business concept drew his attention; Khamis saw in it the opportunity of a lifetime to enter the business world with a totally new concept which was previously not marketed in the Sultanate. Talking about the moment when he was first inspired, Khamis noted: “I was travelling to Germany, and I noticed the presence of small mobile vans that provided a quick and efficient car wash service for busy car owners. Rather than taking their vehicles to a car

wash, this service washed and cleaned cars at a location of the owners choosing, without the owner having to go to the car wash and wait in long queues. This was a really convenient concept I had never seen before. I liked the idea so much and I felt that it will give me the opportunity to start my own business. Immediately upon my return to Muscat I started planning for my new business – “Quick Car Wash” which provides on-location car washing, waxing, polishing and cleaning service through a network of mobile vans and operators.”

As with many new or novel business concepts, the “Quick Car Wash” started from the seed of an idea, but over time it developed and grew after consultation with experts and mentors in the business area. In the first stage, Khamis Al Sawaii and his “Quick Car Wash” business concept focused on implementing his own project and turning his small business vision into reality. The initial operational concept was to move from location to

location with a small van to wash cars in specific places and to wait for customers to drive by and stop for the service. However, it was at this point that Khamis wished to develop his business model further, as he felt the concept had much more to offer, but he recognised the need to gain expert financial, technical and marketing support in order to fully develop and grow his business. Khamis decided then to join Zubair SEC in order to gain expert guidance and mentorship, and in 2016 he was chosen to be one of the ten winners of the Direct Support Programme.

Commenting on the boost given by Zubair SEC to his fledgling business, Khamis Al noted: “When the business first got underway we quickly started seeing some good results, however I realised I had to work on enhancing and growing the business, and for this I needed financial and technical support and consultation. So I decided to search for an organisation

that can help me achieve this, and after talking with many respected business people and associates I learned that Zubair SEC is considered to be one of the leading organisations in Oman that nurtures, supports and promotes emerging and small enterprises. It was clear to me that Zubair SEC helps small business grow and succeed, and for that reason I applied for its membership.”

“After I became a Zubair SEC member I received consultations, one-on-one training and mentorship from a number of experienced business advisors, all of which was truly valuable to help me grow the business. I worked closely with the team at Zubair SEC to set out a clear strategy and business plan for business growth. After finalising every detail of the business plan I submitted it to apply for the Zubair SEC Direct Support Programme. I was thrilled and humbled to be selected as one of the ten winners! It was an amazing experience, and my acceptance into the program really helped accelerate the growth of my business. The Zubair SEC team have played a key role in the success of my business, starting from developing and refining the concept, gaining expert consultation, as well as receiving the special direct support grant. All these elements have boosted the growth of my business, and helped me in securing good contracts with private sector companies.”

“The “Quick Car Wash” has developed from the original concept of staying in one location awaiting customers, into an innovative “mobile” business that delivers the service to customers at the time and place that suits them best. Whenever

a customer wants their car washed and detailed, they can call us directly and we’ll be there at a time that suits them. We’ve also been fortunate to gain good contracts with governmental organisations and private sector businesses to provide comprehensive services at their locations.”

Khamis Al Sawaii is indeed satisfied with the big leaps he has been able to achieve with his business, but he believes that he has so much more potential to grow for the future; he noted: **“The entire Zubair SEC team have given me support and expert consultation, advice and mentorship that really exceeded my expectations. They stood beside me at many different stages of my journey, and this growth has been achieved much faster than I thought possible. Zubair SEC also helped me obtain a small business loan from Bank Sohar, and they helped me further develop my business model and change in the work mechanisms. Being part of the Direct Support Programme also helped me significantly through the financial grant that has been utilised in purchasing needed equipment, as well as their facilitation of some business contracts with private companies.”**

He added, “The team at Zubair SEC also helped a lot in managing HR challenges so that our employees work in the best possible manner, and in a professional and organised way. The many different facets of support offered by Zubair SEC gave me reassurance that my small business was on the right track, and we were able to reach a breakeven point between expenditure and income within only 6 months from the start

of operations, which was fantastic. They say that “Ambition is limitless”, and I am committed to working with even greater efforts to ensure the continued success and growth of my business.”



Muaawana
Ali Said Abdullah Al Rashdi

For Ali Saeed Abdullah Al Rashdi, it was time for a change. He had previously worked for 10 years in the Royal Air Force of Oman, specifically as a maintenance supervisor. He then went on to join a family-run construction firm as a Marketing Manager. These previous roles gave him a solid foundation and expertise to venture into the world of entrepreneurship and start his own business.

Tapping into his good experience, Ali decided to setup his own maintenance company “Muaawana”. The company focuses on providing a complete range of building maintenance services including plumbing, electricity, carpentry, general maintenance and installation of air conditioners, all using mobile teams of technicians. The philosophy of “Muaawana” is to give clients comprehensive maintenance solutions on a periodical schedule in order to keep buildings in top shape. These services are delivered on a regular or on-demand basis according to the

needs of the building owner. All maintenance charges are first agreed between “Muaawana” and the building owner, and parts or materials that are replaced during maintenance process are charged at an agreed rate. “Muaawana” also provides a rapid response service on-demand which is available 7/24 for any unexpected problems within the building.

Speaking about the concept of “Muaawana”, Ali noted: “My previous work in the Royal Air Force of Oman equipped me with great experience in this field, and my second job in the construction sector deepened that experience. Working closely with property owners and the local community helped me understand the potential market for a company that could provide on-demand call-outs and comprehensive regular maintenance for houses and larger properties both for individuals and corporates. The inception of the idea “Muaawana” started here.”

“Muaawana” started with a team of 3 individuals, who provided services to a limited number of clients, but then the workload developed with the increasing marketing efforts, resulting in an expanded workforce of 3 teams with a total of 13 employees. Ali noted: “We started using social media as a key part of our marketing strategy, which allows us to reach a wider base of potential customers. We also distributed leaflets to introduce our services to the market, which has helped us to gain more corporate clients who have large property portfolios which require on-going maintenance. We also secured good maintenance contracts with several entities within the public and private sectors, in addition to some individuals who have tried our services and decided to sign with us for long-term contracts, and that’s how we were able to develop and grow our business.”

The specialised maintenance business, which was at first a

dream for Ali Al Rashdi rapidly expanded in size, and with this growth he felt that he needed to seek out expert guidance and financial support to expand and develop the business in an organised manner. He noted: “I applied for a loan from some funding organisations, but they rejected my application due to the perceived small size of the maintenance market in the Sultanate. However, I didn’t give up or feel weak, and I decide to look for other organisations that could provide me with the support I needed.”

He noted: “One day, I was listening to a radio programme which was broadcasting live coverage an event held at Sultan Qaboos University. They were discussing the challenges facing small and medium enterprises in the Sultanate, and that’s when I first heard about Zubair SEC. The programme interviewed one of the consultants from the Centre, who spoke of the various services offered to small enterprises and entrepreneurs in Oman. This type of support was just what I was looking for, so I went immediately to where the event was held at the university, meeting with the Zubair SEC team at the event. I spoke with them about my desire of joining the Center, and from here was the start of my promising journey with Zubair SEC when I registered as a member.”

Ali Al Rashdi understood that Zubair SEC could offer many benefits for his fledgling business. He was quickly introduced to various advisors at the Centre, each of whom provided expert guidance, coaching and business planning advice. They facilitated his participation in relevant exhibitions and helped

him in applying to Al Raffd fund for a loan to expand his business. For the loan request, Ali needed to outline a clear vision and business plan for “Muaawana” together with a feasibility study based on projected revenues and expenditures. Zubair SEC team worked closely with Ali to finalise the funding application, and helped him to highlight the potential growth opportunities in the market, which assured the economic viability for business.”

Expressing his gratitude towards Zubair SEC, Al Rashdi noted:

“The team of advisors at the Centre gave me so much support, with expert consultations, advice and mentorship, all of which really contributed to the success of “Muaawana” in a short period of time. They also helped me formulate my marketing strategy which has led the business to profitability in less than 4 months. They were also invaluable in opening new doors of opportunity for me by facilitating contact with new clients, including long-term contracts with companies within The Zubair Corporation.”

“I participated in many training workshops by Zubair SEC on effective marketing and the different methods of marketing through social media. With the Centre’s support, we participated in small enterprises exhibitions which greatly helped to promote the business, and I also won’t forget the great media coverage which was generated by the centre, which helped us to reach a larger number of institutions and individuals. Particularly, I am deeply grateful to be chosen as one of the ten winners of the 2016 Direct Support Programme,

which helped us significantly in the development of our business. The kind support from everyone at Zubair SEC continues to this day!” Ali concluded.

A proudly Omani owned and operated business, “Muaawana” has moved to a new level of progress today. However, Ali Al Rashdi has his eye firmly set on the future, and aims for “Muaawana” to be the most successful maintenance services firm operating in Oman in the years ahead.



Muaawana



Moudy United - Capoeira Sport Club
Mohmood Khamis Humaid Al Oraimi

Capoeira is a Brazilian martial art that combines elements of acrobatics and music to the effect of releasing energy and generating tranquility. It was first developed by Africans, and then moved to Brazil. Capoeira is performed with special Brazilian traditional songs.

Mohmood Khamis Humaid Al Oraimi, owner of the “Moudy United - Capoeira Sport Club” first came to know the sport when he travelled to Brazil and some European countries which have specialized training centres. Mahmood loved the sport and he decided to open a training centre to be the first club specialized in Capoeira in Oman. Commenting on the unique qualities of the sport, Mahmood noted, “Capoeira contributes in generating a positive spirit among practitioners; it is performed in a capoeira roda (ring). I loved the sport since I travelled to Brazil to learn it, and then I traveled to other European countries. After that I decided to open a specialised

Capoeira centre here in the Sultanate. Since it is a new sport to Oman, I faced some obstacles at the beginning, but over time I was able to overcome the challenge, especially with the support I received from the Ministry of Sports Affairs.”

Mahmood Al Oraimi then increased his efforts to spread the sport in Oman. Given its importance and positive physical and mental attributes, Mahmood started to convince parents on the importance of registering their children in the centre to learn the sport. Capoeira helps in nurturing positive habits in children and improves the way they deal with others. He was successful in increasing the number of parents who registered their children in the centre, which contributed in increasing the popularity of the club, especially with the positive outcomes for the children, which amazed the parents.

Mahmood added: “Due to the positive impact on the first

participants, the popularity of the centre increased, and some parents of children with physical disabilities and autism were more encouraged to sign up their children. As a result, the parents were very happy to see noticeable improvement with their children. I can give you one example of a child who was injured in a road accident; he wasn’t able to use his legs and was confined to a wheel chair. After convincing his family to bring him to the club for training he was able to regain his ability to walk after few months.”

With the rising reputation of the Capoeira club and the growing number of participants, Mahmood needed expert advice and financial support to develop the centre. The participation fees Mahmood earns from the trainees is very minimal and does not cover all the operational expenses of the club, especially as it was established for social rather than economic objectives. However, the centre needed new equipment with the rise

in memberships. In order to sustain the centre economically, and to create the aspired social value, Mahmood joined Zubair SEC, which is one of the first initiatives in the Sultanate to promote and support social entrepreneurship and sustainable social impact of business.

Talking about this phase Mahmood noted: “Because of my desire to spread this sport in Oman, I treated the club as a national project that serves the community, without thinking of a complex financial model which charges high fees. With the aim of encouraging others to participate and learn this sport, I decided to provide relatively low participation fees. However, with the increasing number of participants, the operational costs of the centre increased. This sport requires special hand-made equipment which is brought in directly from Brazil. Therefore, I had to look for an organisation which will provide financial and technical support and business guidance, and I sought to become a member at Zubair SEC.”

“At Zubair SEC I got the expert advice and mentorship I needed to develop the operational and financial areas of my project. I also applied for entry into the 2016 Direct Support Programme, and I was very encouraged when I was selected to join the third round of the programme in 2016 and be entitled to a financial grant set for the social entrepreneurship category. This category recognizes a business which aims to create positive and tangible social and economic value simultaneously and sustainably. The financial grant helped me buy a number of equipment and

some other specialized tools. The team at Zubair SEC helped me in developing a business plan that ensures the long-term sustainability of the project, while not losing sight of our primary objective, which is to serve the community with the sport of Capoeira.” Mahmood adds.

The Zubair SEC advisory team have put in place development plans for Mahmood’s business, including a new marketing campaign, providing special packages for companies and other institutions. The sport of Capoeira is also proving popular with institutions to boost team building relationships for employees when away from a work environment and to reduce work stress. The first institution to sign a contract with Mahmood was The Zubair Corporation, quickly followed by other leading companies in Oman. The Zubair SEC team also helped Mahmood develop an events outreach programme for private schools, as well as communicating with Al-Masarra Hospital for possible partnership to help in treating drug addiction cases by involving patients in Capoeira.

Thanking Zubair SEC for their efforts in supporting the project, Mahmood Al Oraimi said: “I benefited a lot from the consultancy provided by Zubair SEC as well as the extended financial and moral support. The business now has a clear path which will help me in achieving my goals for the benefit of the society, while being sustainable economically. Now I have a better understanding of social enterprises and best practices in managing them and growing in impact.”

Social Entrepreneurship Seat at
The Direct Support Programme 2016



Moudy United - Capoeira Sport Club



Entrepreneurship and a Sustainable Development

We believe that cultivating a culture of entrepreneurship is the best path to achieve a more diversified and sustainable national economy. Indeed, the importance of a strong and vibrant SME community underscores every successful economy in the world, which is confirmed by global and local statistics and studies. A report issued recently by the Omani Economic Association mentioned that SMEs represent %90 of global economic projects and account for up to %60 of the total work force. This rate increases in East Asian countries to %85 of the total work force. SMEs represent more than %95 of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) economies, and provide between %70-60 of job opportunities while contributing with %55 of the GDP.

As such, we at Zubair SEC believe that one of the important elements of sustainable development lies in building an economy with more diverse sources of income and one that relies increasingly on the SME sector. Globally, SMEs are key players in building young and emerging economies which are more resilient and able to overcome challenges. Building such an effective ecosystem of SME's must be governed through certain conditions and commitment by all stakeholders to collaborate and unify efforts to achieve that goal.

Zubair SEC – in line with The Zubair Corporation's social impact strategy - renews its commitment to provide all possible support and effort towards the development and sustainability of the SME sector in Oman.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all individuals and organisations that extended their support and encouragement to Zubair SEC members, believing that what we do has a pivotal value for the nation as a whole and reflects positively on the future of Oman.

Driven by Love for Oman