



## SUCCESS STORY

### Om Ali Learns to Sew

**Women get a chance to learn useful skills at summer camp**



Photo: USAID

Women at a summer camp in Amran, Yemen, learn to sew.

***“I never had the chance to go to school when I was a kid,” said Om Ali Abdullah, a 40-year-old Yemeni woman who attended a three-week summer camp for women at the local school.***

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

When they heard about the USAID-sponsored summer camp in Shohada Al-Sabeen School, Om Ali, Intisar, and a number of women from neighboring villages could not wait to participate. Although there was some controversy over whether it was appropriate for women to be going to school, even if it was just summer school, Om Ali and her daughter were determined to participate. When they heard that they would learn skills that would help them generate income, such as sewing and handicrafts, they became even more determined. Om Ali convinced her husband that it would be fine, since it was a group activity only for women. Moreover, she would be there to watch over their daughter.

Om Ali had a sewing machine that she inherited from her mother. It had been lying in a corner in her house for more than 15 years. She couldn’t use it, because no one ever taught her how.

“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 learned 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 she had really enjoyed learning new skills.