

Sonia M'HAMDI - Oulat Sabra

Sidi Bouzid

Sonia M'Hamdi has always enjoyed experimenting in her kitchen and decided to turn her passion into a business with the support of her husband. Launched in 2017, 'Oulat Sabra' offers a range of traditional condiments which are freshly prepared from a mixture of different spices.

«I gained my degree in International Trade at the ISET of Sfax in 2005,” explains Sonia. “During a university course in business creation I got the idea for a project that produces condiments to meet the needs of busy people who are looking to quickly and easily prepare high quality meals.”

The idea soon became a passion for Sonia and she gradually mastered her craft, trying out recipes on her close friends and neighbours. In her drive for perfection, Sonia sought to differentiate her condiments based on their quality, using only the freshest spices and the finest ingredients.

Before launching her project, Sonia contacted the “Espace Entreprendre” in 2016 where she did the MORaine training that helped to identify her objectives and potential, as well as the CEFE training in order to assess the resources needed to make her business a reality.

«That's when I heard about the Mashrou3i program's HP LIFE training. During the training I learned how to calculate the break-even point in order to cover variable costs and fixed costs, and to determine the start-up costs of my business. It also taught me how to best market my products, to attract and respond to the needs of clients and to identify ways to ensure the quality of my products.”

Besides benefiting from the HP LIFE training organized by UNIDO with the support of its partners USAID, the Italian Development Cooperation and the HP Foundation, Sonia also received technical assistance from Mashrou3i experts.

The experts enabled Sonia to finalize her business plan and facilitated access to finance to launch her business. As a result, she obtained a credit of 20,000 Tunisian dinars from the BTS for the rental of her business unit located in the city centre of Sidi Bouzid and the acquisition of 4 grinders for the preparation of her condiments.

«The mentoring that I received from Mashrou3i really focused on the needs of my start-up and was crucial in allowing me to realize my project. The coaching continued over time, following my progress and I was invited to join additional Mashrou3i trainings, like a group coaching workshop in order to improve my marketing skills.”

Through Oulat Sabra, Sonia and her husband represent a new hope for young entrepreneurs in the region of Sidi Bouzid, as well as an added element of diversity in the sector of traditional condiment preparation.

«In the long term, I want to ensure the prosperity of my business by acquiring other grinders and a bagging weighing machine that will allow me to improve the packaging of my product range and its marketing. After securing a better working capital, I will create two more jobs in my area and will invest in a car for delivery.»