



Ibtissem BERRACHID - "Clean Ezzahra"

Zaghouan

Ibtissem Berrechid is the founder of Clean Ezzahra, a manufacturer of detergents and household cleaning products. Located in Fahs, in the region of Zaghouan, the business provides employment to two people.

Ibtissem studied Banking and Finance in Mahdia where she graduated in 2008 with a Master's Degree and a Master's in Business Creation in 2009.

Active by nature, Ibtissem very quickly found a job in the private sector where she worked as a sales manager for a few different companies.

"While working in these companies, I gained professional experience that made me confident that I had the skills needed to start and run my own business," says Ibtissem. Her analysis of the business environment led her to the idea of launching a detergent manufacturing unit and she began to develop her business plan.

With a lot of will, she focused her attention on overcoming the obstacles needed to realize her business project. When asked by the bank to present an obligatory certificate of professional aptitude, Ibtissem spent a year working in a company to gain the necessary qualification.

"I was psychologically ready for the second stage of the challenge: the project's feasibility study and contacted the Zaghouan Business Center for help," says Ibtissem.

The Business Center put Ibtissem in touch with experts from the Mashrou3i project, organized by UNIDO and funded by USAID, the Italian Cooperation and the HP Foundation. "I was first connected with an expert in communication and market access who helped refine my marketing skills, fostered my commercial spirit and provided training on ways to

gain and retain customers," explains Ibtissem. "Since then the support from Mashrou3i has been ongoing. I've received business coaching and mentoring to help me gradually overcome the obstacles needed to launch my business."

In December 2017, Ibtissem obtained a bank credit of 27,000 Tunisian Dinars from BTS (Tunisian Solidarity Bank). Two months later she had installed all equipment and started her business.

Thanks to the support of Mashrou3i, Ibtissem was able to register her trademark with the INNORPI (National Institute of Normative and Industrial Property) and to take the necessary steps to ensure that her products meet national standards in terms of health, hygiene and quality.

Ibtissem is also being supported to expand the distribution channels of her products to include the new wholesalers and retailers in addition to the mini-markets in the area which currently stock her products.

"I started with basic products for the washing machine, dishwasher, bleach and other deodorizing detergents with three different scents. Then I gradually added more elaborate products to remove limescale and a grease recalcitrant. This step by step development of quality products has allowed me to test the market and to retain my customers.

"Despite limited working capital, which forces me to buy small amounts of raw materials, with the support of Mashrou3i, I am optimistic about the future," says Ibtissem. "Recently I was given the opportunity to present my business on regional radio after a training in oral techniques. Afterwards I was immediately contacted by potential customers interested in my products."