

SUCCESS STORY

Sultan Basyoni

Weaving Ideas into Business Success: With USAID Support, Jordanian Entrepreneur Launches Online Clothing Store



Sultan Basyoni paid his way through law school by working as a call center agent at Jordanian telecom Orange. Despite landing a full-time job there upon graduation, the now-39 year-old always had a hankering for entrepreneurship — an impulse that only grew stronger as he began traveling to the Gulf for work. It was there that he first developed an interest in the *thobe*, the traditional men's garb common throughout the region.

"I realized there were no major *thobe* retailers in Jordan," said Basyoni, who recalls how he sought to bridge that gap through online retailing. In November 2017, he turned that idea into a reality by developing the concept for his web-based platform, Tarteeb.

Like many entrepreneurs in the country, Basyoni struggled to find a way to convert his concept into a viable business. That's when he decided to apply to Oasis500, the country's first-of-its-kind seed investor and a model for others throughout the region.

With funding from the USAID Jordan Competitiveness Program (JCP), Oasis500 has helped attract more than four million dollars in investment for 35 start-ups, which in turn have leveraged an additional quarter-million dollars through follow-on investment. It has done this by leading a dozen boot camps for 413 budding entrepreneurs, the most promising of whom also received fundraising training and had their businesses incubated at the Oasis facilities in the King Hussein Business Park.

That hands-on support was instrumental in launching Tarteeb, according to Basyoni, who joined the Oasis500 program in May 2018. He recalls that "the support included an online marketing campaign to promote Tarteeb through several social media platforms, including Facebook, Google and Instagram."

The campaign provided Tarteeb with the kind of exposure it needed to begin building its customer base, including — crucially — in the Gulf. He credits this experience with teaching him about "the importance of online promotion, product positioning, and understanding the target audience."

"We are currently building version 2.0 of our product and raising a bridge fund to establish a foothold in the GCC," he says of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. JCP helped promote "the right message about

Tarteeb and raise awareness of our brand,” he adds, pointing to increased traffic to the start-up’s website traffic, which includes tutorial videos for potential customers looking to order custom *thobes* online.

Asked about his future plans as an entrepreneur, Basyoni was ambitious. “I want to take Tarteeb to the next level and become *the* platform for everything custom-made.” That’s why he’s currently seeking pre-seed funding to grow Tarteeb and become a vital brand in the GCC, ultimately turning the company into a venture capital start-up.

Through JCP, USAID has played a critical role in growing the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jordan — from scaling Oasis500 offerings to more start-ups to helping these new companies grow through the services of the Kingdom’s most prominent business accelerator, iPARK. With USAID support, the latter has now expanded from Amman to satellite locations in Irbid and Aqaba, where it serves more than a hundred fledgling businesses employing hundreds more Jordanians.

To learn more about USAID’s support to Jordan’s economic competitiveness or to read more success stories from JCP, please visit jordancompetitiveness.org.