



‘SPOTLIGHT ON’ A Sustainable Future Series brought to you by



Shell Oman's Support of Entrepreneurship Through Intilaaqah and Solar Into Schools

Najwa Mansoor Alkindi – Director of Intilaaqah – Shell Development Oman

Shell Intilaaqah is Shell's flagship enterprise development programme which launched in Oman in 1995 and is part of Shell's Global LiveWIRE social investment initiative. Through Intilaaqah, Shell aims to support and strengthen local economies by promoting entrepreneurship and innovation. Since its inception, Intilaaqah's various offerings have reached more than 25,000 young Omanis across the Sultanate.

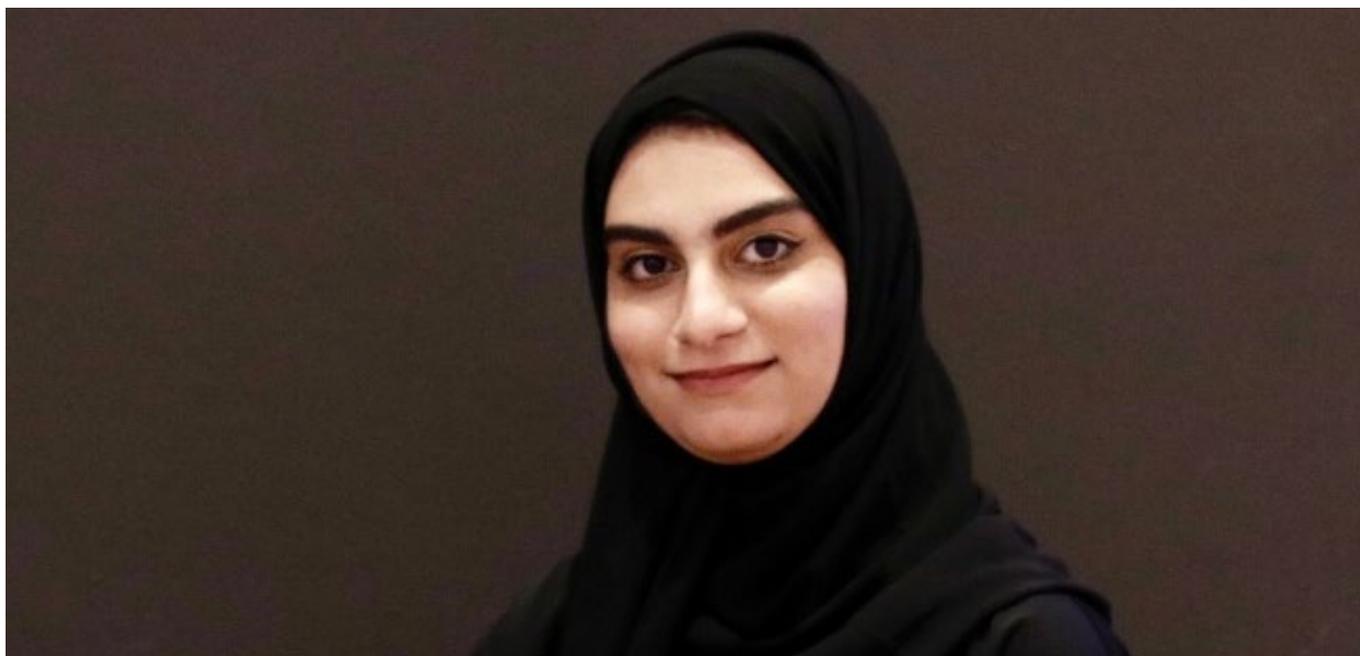
At Shell, we constantly look for ways to support SMEs, especially through these challenging times. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, we have seen SMEs globally looking for ways to survive these difficult economic circumstances. In Oman, Shell Oman found that sharing learnings and key practices from experienced SMEs with startups has proven to be the best way to create a platform for SMEs to engage with and benefit from the real-life experiences of successful Omani entrepreneurs. Using online platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams, Intilaaqah Oman launched live webinar sessions called "Jalasaat Intilaaqah" or "Intilaaqah gatherings" in Arabic. These monthly virtual sessions have seen a great amount of turnout, with 900 number of participants joining online in the series of live Instagram discussions.

Throughout the past few years, Intilaaqah Oman has focused on capacity building for SMEs and entrepreneurs who are at ideation or early start-up phase, looking to establish or scale-up their enterprises and looking to sustain and manage their business successfully. When COVID-19 hit the world, these SMEs were put to the ultimate test to improve and further bolster their innovation and business development skills.

Intilaaqah Oman has great examples of how SMEs got out of their comfort zone and started thinking of business ideas that are relevant, needed and innovative.



Abdullah Ahmed Salim Almamari is an Intilaaqah alumni, created Oman Recycling Company, an environmental and industrial company based on recycling waste and converting it into materials of high economic value. Abdullah has applied for Shell Livewire's Top Ten Innovators contest and hopes to qualify as one of the winners. Abdullah's advice to other SMEs is to participate and benefit from courses and workshops on entrepreneurship, which develop their skills and experience in the field. He also recommends seeking expert advice so as to avoid mistakes, which can help in saving effort, time and money.



Ola Ali Al Maaniya is an innovator that participated in Shell Oman's Intilaaqah program. Ola and her team invented gloves which are made in an innovative and environmentally friendly way using nano-technology, which works to kill and prevent the spread of viruses and germs. Given the surge in demand for gloves due to COVID-19 (and given the risk of transmission when using regular gloves), her aim is to strengthen design defects in gloves currently available in the market.

She says that the Shell Intilaaqah program provided her with moral support, guidance, direction and continuous follow-up in developing the product in its best form.

Ahmed bin Amor bin Saud Al Jabri is an Intilaaqah SME entrepreneur who choose to embark into smart technology, and has developed a smart irrigation product. He is the founder of Qatara for modern irrigation.

The product uses a lamp that has sensors for humidity and solar cells and acts as a sensor for moisture level between crops, when the moisture levels are low, the sensor sends readings to the controller via Wi-Fi and then a signal is sent to the pump to open and close it according to the sensor readings.

When asked for advice for SMEs and entrepreneurs in Oman, the Qatra founder urged SMEs to continue their path, whatever the challenges and difficulties they face, and if there is his will, there is a way to achieve the goal. Future plans for Qatra include developing the product so that it senses temperature, pH, and harmful insects for trees, and it also seeks to develop the application into an integrated system.



These entrepreneurs have proven that business ideas are not developed in isolation, but instead emerge from real societal and economical needs. Building capacity and leveraging business development opportunities is also another goal that Shell set through its Gift to the Nation; Solar into Schools project. Solar into schools is considered a groundbreaking project that contributed to the start the PV solar business in Oman. Under 'Solar into Schools' initiative, Shell and Ministry of Education are contracting Omani solar SMEs to install solar systems into 22 public schools across the Sultanate over the next five years. It has helped expedite the development of the first set of Omani regulations on PV solar projects. This project has also helped the government to come up with renewables initiatives to promote PV solar (e.g. Sahim 1) and helped to promote Omani SME companies to start their business in renewables. Nevertheless, SIS helped to lay down the foundations for Oman 2040 vision on diversifying its energy portfolio.



The objective of Solar into Schools program is to construct, commission and operate small scale grid connected solar plants in Schools in Oman by Omani SMEs. Main goal is developing the capacity of local Omani SME to the required Shell contracts like skills in HSSE, skills in O&G minimum tender requirements, regulations, design & engineering. Examples of SMEs supported by SIS project Several Omani SME companies supported as part of the Gift to the Nation Solar into Schools: Hussam Technology Company, Nafath for Renewables, Continental Shelf, Fajwa for Solar.

At Shell Oman, we have received recognition for our programmes such as Intilaaqah and Solar Into Schools.

Intilaaqah received the Riyada Entrepreneurship award, which is considered a prestigious national award. Key stakeholders like Governmental entities (such as the Ministry of Commerce), SMEs, partners and other key SME ecosystem players have expressed positive feedback regarding the programs.

Solar into Schools has also been the recipient of positive feedback by Governmental entities such as the Ministry of Education, Authority Electricity Regulator, Municipalities, Governors and Waliyats.

Shell is looking into linking its social investment programs to sustainability objectives through designing them to deliver more value relevant to this area.