

Nisaa Sidab

نساء سداب

Appreciations dinner held on Sidab House Rooftop, December 14th



Happy New Year

Thank you for all your support during 2011



Women's Guild visits Sidab

On Wednesday 14th December 2011 I was lucky enough to attend an open evening held by Sidab Women's Sewing Group at their headquarters in the scenic village of Sidab. Guests were shown around the house, which during the day is a hive of activity not just with sewing but including their new projects of photography, English lessons, cooking and IT. Everything is neat and organised which I am sure goes a long way towards the group's success.

Co-founder Badriya al Siyabi truly deserves applause and recognition for this wonderful initiative. The group started small and has managed - with various help and support from local corporations and groups - to produce occupation, interest and income for many Omani women. The group base their sewing designs on local tradition and their beautiful bags and hand crafted products have become famous. But this isn't all the group do - as I indicated above - their beautifully framed photographs and greetings cards are also popular.

Having enjoyed a delicious traditional Omani meal on the headquarters rooftop on this occasion I can also truthfully say that adding cooking to the programme is inspired! It is a pleasure and honour to be associated with such a forward thinking group and I wish them every success in their future endeavours.

Sally Sleep, Women's Guild in Oman



Sally Sleep, Women's Guild in Oman

Ceremony of THANKS on Sidab House Rooftop, December 14th



**Jamie Bowden,
British Ambassador**



**Marc Mazairac,
Dutch Embassy**



**Raoul Restucci,
PDO**



**Jane Woolliscroft ,
NAWRAS**

Achievements in 2011

2011 has been a year full of new projects and experiences at the Sidab Ladies Group. 2012 also promises to be just as exciting thanks to all the partners who have pledged support to the group. Our heartfelt thanks goes to British and Dutch Embassies, PDO, Shangri-La, JOTUN, NAWRAS, Studio Basel, Dar Al Atta and the Women's Guild in Omen for their valuable support so far. A recent dinner of appreciation was held on the rooftop and we were honoured to host representatives of all the mentioned organisations, giving a wonderful opportunity to showcase our progress and also our future plans, to the background sounds of an Omani drumming group and food cooked by members of the group.



Computers Technology came to Sidab with the arrival of computers and printers. A programme of computer lessons has begun at the house thanks to Louise our new computer volunteer, making the dream of running an internet cafe for the local community creep closer to fruition.

Sewing The news of the Sidab products has been travelling beyond the boundaries of Oman in 2011 - the sewing group has seen orders come from as far afield as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as well as supplying Muscat Airport, various Ministries and the Shangri-La to mention a few. They have recently received an order of 1,500 mobile covers and so the ladies are busy at their sewing machines making this happen. Attiya and her team have introduced many new designs into the range of products and encourage visitors to return to the house to see the latest stock. The sewing team have had great success in attending events including the Women's Guild Craft fair and the National Day event at Bander Al Rowder.

English Lessons The volume in the house is rising and now its in English rather than Arabic. Our English teaching volunteers are delighted to report that progress has seen great improvement, with many ladies more confident in holding conversations after a series of role play situations. Kareema Juma said 'After our English lessons I was happy to standup and speak in front of all the guests at the dinner, it was lovely but not something I would have felt I could do before the lessons. We were honoured to have such important guests that night.



Photography Khoula's *Clothes Talk* business received a boost with the donation of a Canon colour printer enabling her to print out photos on the spot for visitors. Around 30 visitors to the house have entered her studio and dressed up in traditional Omani dress for a photoshoot. It is a wonderful idea as a memory of Oman for tourists and residents and Khoula has also entered the world of wedding photography and birthday parties.

An aim for 2012 is to offer cards with photos of Oman and also set up a passport photo service for the neighborhood.

Cooking Our resident chef Suad was invited to spend a month with the chefs at the Shangri-La to build her culinary skills. She thoroughly enjoyed her time there, learning many new techniques and spending a week at each of the different kitchen stations. On the back of the confidence from her experience at the Shangri-La, Suad cooked a traditional Omani lunch for 8 women in a house in MQ where she demonstrated skills she learnt and left recipes for the ladies to re-create. This is a service she is looking forward to offering in 2012.

The journey to success in 2011 was summed up by Fakhrya and Muna who said that the group has changed their lives, without it they would have been sat at home minding the children full time. The House has enabled them to be empowered, add to the income of the families but most importantly has also built a huge network of support among the women, with everyone contributing to the continued success of the house financially and emotionally.



Pictures from Open House, November 15th

