

SUCCESS STORY

LIVELIHOOD



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Safia Sheikh Abdulkadir who lived with her mother and three brothers in an IDP camp in Wadajir District of Banadir Region crossed to Saudi Arabia through the Red Sea thrice and was deported thrice. According to her the longest period she stayed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in each of her trips was 6 months. She also says the number of months she worked in the KSA for her three trips totals to 7 months where she worked as housemaid. In one of her trips to the KSA, she narrates horrifying story, "In my last trip across the red sea, I escaped death narrowly. I was travelling in a small boat with 40 others who were heading to the same destination. The boat in which we were sailing encountered some mechanical problem before reaching Yemen shore-line. The sea was also rough. The hope of getting some help was not forthcoming. Everyone started struggling for survival. Those who were good swimmers, particularly the male youth jumped into the water and started swimming towards the shore, which we could view in the far horizon. I was lucky to have jerry-can with me. I too jumped into the water and started swimming towards the shore using the empty jerry-can. When the first group of swimmers reached the shoreline, 2 boats owned by Yemani fishermen came to rescue those who were still alive. I was among the lucky ones. They carried me to the shore after which I became unconscious. I found myself in a hospital a day later. Six of our colleagues were not lucky to survive."

After having gone through such agony, Safia once more encountered deportation from Saudi Arabia. After staying for six months with her family in Mogadishu, she planned to go through the same route again. She says, "This time I was lucky. While I was in the final preparation for the voyage, a community elder in our neighborhood, who was very much aware of household food security status and my plan to go through the dangerous route, came to my mother and told her that he had enrolled me with New Ways skill training center. He also gave the necessary details as he was a member of the committee working with the beneficiary identification and registration process. I then started class where I was trained on Salon and Henna Decorations."

Having acquired skills, Safia, along with other course mate have hired a room where they attend to women coming for henna decoration and salon. When asked about how the skills she acquired support her in earning a living and above all if she is still willing to endanger her life by travelling across the Red Sea, she said, "The skills I gained have just begun to bear fruit. Two of my training colleagues and I opened this center 2 months ago and the feedback we can give is so far so good. I am at least able to meet my family's basic household needs. I don't see any reason as to why I should go for dangerous trips. I was looking for a living in Saudi Arabia, but I have it here now. Thanks to God."