



Women's Salon @IOM Libya 2023

## EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR LASTING PEACE IN LIBYA

Since 2016, IOM Libya's community stabilization programming has supported communities in the Southern region of the country, aiming to address the root causes of conflict and foster a future of harmony. Employing an innovative approach, IOM has been dedicating its efforts at restoring peace and stability, both horizontally within communities and vertically between the communities and governments. This is accomplished through grassroots planning and activities that revitalize essential services, strengthen social bonds, and improve economic prospects for Libyan communities and migrants alike.

Believing that the path to sustainable peace is paved by empowering the youth and women of the communities, in 2023, IOM Libya launched the second cycle of the Women's Salon initiative in Sabha,

Ubari, Qatroun, and Kufra. The Women's Salon gatherings provide a nurturing space for women to actively participate in vibrant discussions and focus on personal growth, with the broader aim of benefiting their communities. Extending further beyond dialogues and discussions, the Women's Salon encourages a holistic journey of self-improvement, incorporating activities like yoga and mindfulness to cultivate inner peace, along with encouraging critical thinking and promoting positive communication skills. The impact of this initiative resonated deeply, drawing in nearly 300 women from various segments of the Libyan society who eagerly participated in these transformative self-development sessions. Furthermore, a dedicated group has also been created to provide mutual support and guidance to mothers and caregivers of children with autism and disabilities. IOM's objective is to assist these women in navigating their challenging circumstances and connecting with others who share similar journeys.



## VOICES OF THE EMPOWERED

Iman, a young woman from Sabha, said: "I was living in Sirte and I moved to Sabha after my father passed away to live with my sisters and their families. I never socialized with other people here and I was spending my days at home, depressed. I started coming to the salon and I saw all these women willing to open [up] to each other and discuss personal and emotional experiences, I immediately felt a sense of belonging! I attended the mindfulness sessions, and we discussed personal development, our dreams and fears. I felt inspired to take over my life and focus on me!"

Itimad, also from Sabha, said: "I was thinking of closing my pastry shop since I can't afford to buy the essential equipment I need. During the salon, I attended a business and financial plan[ning] workshop and it gave me hope again. I decided to ask for a small loan and continue with my business!"