

## **“A difference is made in the life of Um Ali”**

*Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE), (Empowerment Grant Beneficiary NGO)*

Mrs. Sharifa Yosef Ali (Um Ali) is one of the Empowerment Grant end beneficiaries. She is a 51 year old handicrafts expert from Beit Rima, West of Ramallah, and is responsible to financially support her sick husband and eight children.

In 2001, Um Ali attended a handicrafts training course at the Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE), in Ramallah, among other courses, to further develop her skills in copper plating, weaving baskets from olive branches, producing olive oil soap and decorating pottery with embroidered cloth. Um Ali excelled in this craft, and PACE offered her the position of Handicraft Trainer at the association. In January 2008, Um Ali became a senior trainer at PACE providing handicrafts trainings to women from different villages in the West Bank and to school students in Ramallah. PACE has been also helping in marketing the produced handicrafts in which some items were sold at double the price of that prior to PACE's intervention.



Um Ali is very grateful for the support NDC provided to PACE, she said "without the generous financial support of NDC I wouldn't have been able to work and to support my family, for that I encourage further support to such income generating programs and to allow for others to benefit as I had". Currently her income exceeds 600 USD a month as a trainer at PACE. She also indicated that "I am committed to communicating handicraft skills to others including my children". She has already trained her daughters and older sons on handicraft production, and is determined to pass this skill to her younger children including the ones who have received university education.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that PACE is a Palestinian NGO with a mission to protect and promote endangered Palestinian Cultural Heritage, and particularly "Traditional Palestinian Handicrafts". In October 2007, PACE received a Grant from NDC for a total amount of USD 65,000 to conduct different trainings for women living in marginalized and poor areas in addition to purchase the needed equipment and raw material.