



young people to send their ideas. She was overjoyed especially about the mentoring program that the TCF promised her.

She applied to the fund for a loan, and had to undergo a rigorous selection and approval process. "I understood that the fund had to be extremely careful in granting loans since they did not require any financial guarantees." She said. She added proudly "I was the main asset of the project and that is why they had to make sure that I was committed to my dream, and was able to do the required work to make it happen."

At last Ghalia was informed that her loan application was accepted. She appreciated fully the implication of that acceptance. "The fund had shown their trust in me." She beamed proudly. Ghalia knew that she had 6 months to start her business and another 6 months grace period before she had to start the repayment of her loan, and even though the repayment period was over a period of 5 years, she had every intention of trying to pay it before that.

The day she was accepted by TCF was the first day of what she considered to be her real life as the adult she always dreamed she would become. And in her own words "Out of the blue, and when I didn't know where to turn, God brought about the means to make my dream come true. The Centennial Fund answered all my prayers."

She is determined "I am still very far from success but I know that I will succeed. "The Centennial Fund does not only finance the project, with them I have access to many people with skills and expertise that I would otherwise never know." Ghalia was assigned a mentor who is responsible for guiding her through difficult business decisions and helps TCF to identify any training needs that Ghalia has to enhance her business skills. Together they will make the project a success.

She told us "At last I am taking the first steps towards realizing my childhood dream and I am constantly thanking God for giving me this opportunity to do so.

During his recent visit to Saudi Arabia, Mr. Andrew Devonport the Executive Director of YBI met Ghalia and her mentor. He immediately appreciated the role model that can emerge from this exceptional young lady, and he promised to put her in touch with Ms. Elizabeth Marsh, another inspiring lady who started her career like Ghalia, and is now spending hundreds

of hours mentoring young fashion designers all over the globe. Yet another example of how international initiatives can help young people everywhere, and how the bridges of friendship between the two nations can help a young woman achieve her dreams.

There are currently over 300 million unemployed and underemployed young people aged 18 to 30 years around the world. At least 20% of these young people have the potential to become entrepreneurs, less than 5% do. The scale of this waste is enormous; youth unemployment is an international problem leading, whether it occurs in Britain or on the other side of the world, to poverty, alienation and wasted potential.

One way of tackling this unacceptable waste of energy and talent is to help young people into self-employment and by giving them the chance to gain life skills, self-esteem and employability. An entrepreneurial culture develops and there is a healthy boost to the small business sector.

YBI's role is to build the capacity of existing and new programmes such as TCF in Saudi Arabia and to act as an international advocate for its network. It can provide training and guidance on setting up programmes, on recruiting and managing volunteers and on establishing benchmarks and standards. Through its network of country programmes and partners it provides a comprehensive and innovative source of expertise in helping disadvantaged young people become entrepreneurs.

In each country, business people are active in their own communities, creating new programmes and taking pride in their success in providing support, and particularly mentors, for young people starting their own businesses. The whole society benefits and prospers in its own way; the young entrepreneur, the mentor and the economy of the country.

