



SUCCESS STORY

With USAID ACED Program Support, Local Business Improves Hygiene Practices and Expands Market Share

Aqaba entrepreneur grows his business



Top: Views of the ice cream production area *after* recommendations were adopted. **Bottom:** Commercial outlet with Frutta Gelato ice cream freezer purchased through USAID's ACED Program.

ACED Program

As part of its mission to improve the competitiveness of the private sector, USAID's Aqaba Community and Economic Development (ACED) Program has been providing food hygiene technical assistance and training to hotels and food vendors in Aqaba. The program helps businesses in the hospitality sector improve their food safety practices, as sanitary food storage and handling is central to their profitability and growth.

The ACED Program offers food hygiene consulting and training, as well as commodity grants of up to \$10,000, based upon the implementation of hygiene improvement recommendations. The owner of the Frutta Gelato ice cream shop in downtown Aqaba, with two full-time employees and two part-timers, requested the ACED Program's support to facilitate the improvement and expansion of his business. After surveying Frutta Gelato's production and commercial facilities, USAID's ACED Program consultant presented the ice cream business owner with detailed recommendations and training for improving handling and storage practices, upgrading the production area, and procuring new equipment for immediate and mid-term application. These recommendations were in accordance with the internationally recognized Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) guidelines for food safety.

The consultant's follow-up visits confirmed that the Frutta Gelato owner had made serious efforts to put into practice the hygiene recommendations as evidenced by the marked improvements in cleanliness, documentation, storage practices, and production infrastructure. Based on the owner's outstanding performance, the ACED Program provided a \$10,000 grant for purchasing freezers to expand Frutta Gelato's retail presence in numerous commercial outlets around Aqaba. Consequently, Frutta Gelato increased its staff to four full-time employees as ice cream production doubled from twice a month to once a week. Moreover, the Frutta Gelato's owner expects his annual income to increase by around \$15,000.

The promotion of safe food handling contributes to the sustainability and growth of Aqaba's emerging hospitality industry.