

SI HMAD DERHEM

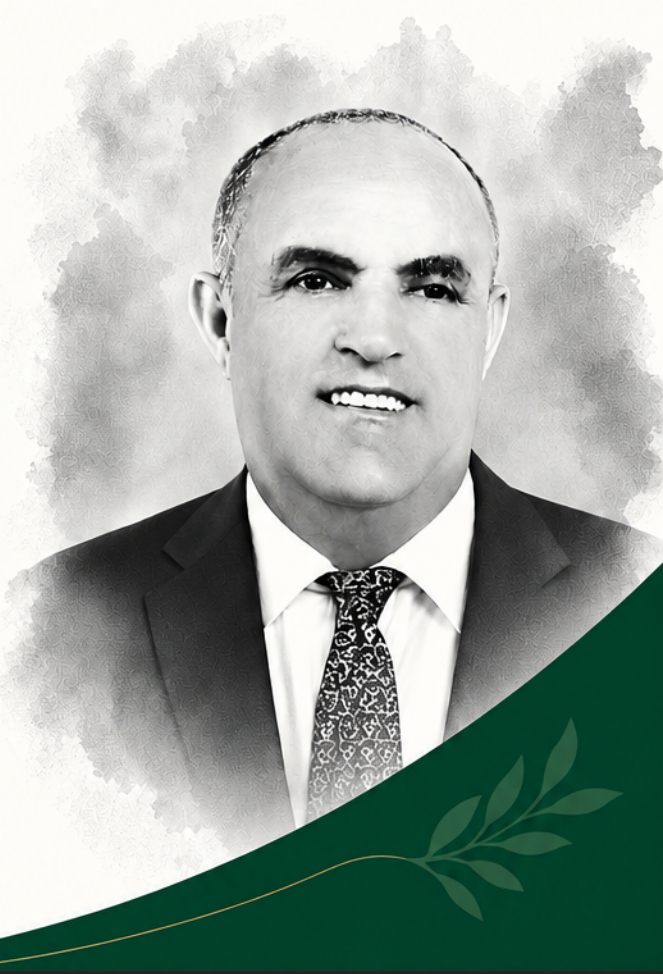
(1909–1982)

*A life rooted in place,
carried forward through generations*

The name that inspires our purpose is Si Hmad Derhem (1909–1982). We carry his name not simply to honor his memory, but to carry forward the values that defined his life. More than a successful entrepreneur, Si Hmad was a man of vision, integrity and service. He believed that knowledge, solidarity and opportunity gain their deepest meaning when they are shared for the benefit of others.

His life reminds us that achievement is not measured only by what one builds for oneself, but by what one makes possible for others.

Today, Dar Si Hmad seeks to embody that same spirit: the courage to imagine possibilities where others see constraints, the responsibility to serve the common good, and the conviction that even fragile territories can flourish when people work together.



A Man Rooted in His Land

Born in the village of Taloust at the dawn of the 20th century, in the Aït-Baâmrane region of southwest Morocco, Si Hmad Derhem grew up in a land shaped by scarcity, resilience and a deep attachment to place.

Like many of his generation, he left his homeland at a young age in search of opportunity. Through determination, intelligence and entrepreneurial talent, he built a successful commercial career. Yet his greatest achievement was never the wealth he accumulated. It was the way he understood success as something that could be returned to the people and places that had shaped him.

Throughout his life, he remained profoundly connected to his native region, convinced that prosperity only has meaning when it strengthens the communities and landscapes from which it emerges.

That attachment to place is one of the threads that runs from his life to the work of Dar Si Hmad today.



Knowledge as a Common Good

Although largely self-taught beyond his traditional Islamic education, Si Hmad believed deeply in the transformative power of knowledge. He encouraged learning, facilitated the circulation of ideas and invested in people long before education and capacity building became central themes of development.

Working alongside communities in Aït-Baâmrane and the Sahara, he helped establish networks of mutual aid that improved living conditions and reinforced the spirit of solidarity that has long characterized the region.

For him, knowledge was not a privilege to be possessed. It was a responsibility to be shared. This conviction remains deeply present in Dar Si Hmad: knowledge matters most when it travels — between people, generations and places — and when it gives others the means to act.



Courage in Times of Uncertainty

Si Hmad Derhem's life unfolded during one of the most turbulent periods in Morocco's history. As a businessman, he contributed to the economic development of the southern provinces while navigating the complexities of colonial rule. As a citizen, he supported the aspirations for independence and remained steadfast in his commitment to his country and its people.

His convictions came at a personal cost. Political upheaval, exile and repeated challenges marked his journey. Yet throughout these difficult years, he demonstrated remarkable resilience, returning again and again to what mattered most: serving his community and contributing to the future of his homeland.

His story is therefore not only one of achievement, but of conviction — of continuing to act according to one's values when circumstances make doing so difficult.



An Enduring Legacy

The heirs of Si Hmad Derhem established the Derhem Foundation, the principal endowment supporting Dar Si Hmad, to ensure that his values would continue to inspire future generations. His legacy is not preserved as a memory of the past, but carried forward as a living source of guidance for the future.

At Dar Si Hmad, we believe that every generation inherits a responsibility toward the land, the people and the knowledge entrusted to it. Inspired by Si Hmad's example, we strive to create opportunities where others see constraints, to cultivate innovation without losing sight of what has been learned before, and to strengthen the enduring relationship between communities and the landscapes they call home.

“His name gave the Foundation its identity. His values continue to give it direction.”