



## Aatik - Women Weaving a Revolution

**Thanks to your donations, 10 women artisans will be trained in design and workshop management, which will enable them to create their own, socially-minded small business.**

### The story of Aatik

El Aroussa is located in the governorate of Siliana, a region which is historically known for its agricultural production and weaving tradition. The delegation of Aroussa and its surroundings are faced with high levels of unemployment relative to the national average (20.5% in Aroussa, compared with 15% at the national level). Women, in particular, are affected.



*Ville d'El Aroussa*

Even those women who are employed tend to be in precarious situations (they are underpaid and often work without a contract or social coverage).

Many women in the region are skilled in the art of weaving - which could serve as a tool for job creation - but until recently, their economic potential has been limited for the following reasons:

- Little transmission of knowledge between the older and the younger generations
- Difficulties with access to markets and financial support (loans, etc.)
- A lack of public and civil society support for the preservation of their craft & economic empowerment
- A lack of training in design, quality control, and management skills

The result is the Aroussa, like many other villages in the region, remains marginalized due to low educational levels and a lack of meaningful encouragement.

## Aatik's solution

Sophie Bergmann and Emma Djilali founded Aatik in November 2015, with the goal of creating a sustainable solution to the social and economic challenges faced by the women of El Aroussa.

Aatik defines itself as a grassroots movement of women acting for the social and economic rights of women. Aatik aims to encourage women artisans to take their future into their own hands by giving them the opportunity, through locally-adapted training programs, to set up their own small enterprise. In doing this, the women will be able to produce and sell their creations as well as manage their own commercial structure/workshop.



*Training session*

In December 2015, in partnership with GIE Siliana Artisana (an economic interest group specialized in weaving and halfa) and the Canadian Embassy, Aatik set up a 3-month training program, centered upon weaving and capacity building, for 22 women participants from Aroussa. Over the course of this program, a small number of women expressed their desire to initiate their very own (independent) weaving project; it is thus that Aatik embarked upon the second phase of its project, which consists of supporting ten women artisans in the establishment of their very own cooperative structure for the production and sale of their handmade kilim rugs.

Our approach is to empower women and introduce new ways of working by encouraging them to work together in the form of an artisans' cooperative. They will be involved in all decisions concerning their workshop and commercial activities, and they will be encouraged to adapt their working structure to their personal, familial and local constraints. In doing so, our hope is that they will be able to establish a strong and supportive community of women with the possibility of improving their social and economic conditions.

Our project and training program seeks to respond to the following questions:

- ) How can I modernize my creations and still preserve the regional handicraft tradition?
- ) How do I manage a workshop?
- ) How can I share my skills and artisan knowledge?
- ) How can I commercialize my products?

## Concretely, what are we proposing?

A training and support program will be offered to 10 women artisans in Aroussa who already possess advanced weaving skills. This program will take place over a 3-month period, taking into account the women's ongoing production schedule and personal constraints. The program will be organized in the following manner:

1. Training in basic financial literacy and project management (organization of tasks, stock/budget management and planning, etc.) in order to reinforce the women's existing skills and help them in the management of their workshop/cooperative. This training program will be centered upon practical,

real-life teaching methods and will place a strong emphasis on group work. The training will be divided into 20 half-days, spread out over a 10-week period.

2. Assistance in the establishment of the women's very own workshop space. This will not only serve as a space for the women to work together for the sale, production and conception of their handicrafts, but also as a safe space for the women to meet and exchange ideas.

3. Collaborative training and support in terms of design, sales strategy and marketing. Along with Sophie and Emma's competencies, a designer will work with the women (over a period of ten days) to assist in the creation of a new collection of kilim rugs. This fall/winter collection will be contemporary but strongly founded upon the stories and traditions of the region.

4. Lastly, the establishment of a legal structure to facilitate the sale of the women artisans' handicrafts.

If you help the women of Aroussa to become financially independent, you are also helping to reinforce an entire community!

**Support the women of Aroussa by enabling them to receive a personalized training program and the technical support needed to establish their own workshop**



### **Aatik's team**

We are a group of women from three different countries with one goal in common: to encourage women artisans to become entrepreneurs and to create employment for other members of their community through their craft.

- **Rabiha Riahi:** workshop manager and artisan team leader. Rabiha is a very skilled weaver from Aroussa who also has a gift for leading and inspiring other artisans.
- **Emma Djilali** is from Canada and has a degree in international trade and development. Emma first came to Tunisia to work on a project that assisted young entrepreneurs in setting up e-

commerce businesses; she then co-founded Aatik, a project which permits artisans to sell their products on their own terms, in order to foster sustainable development in Tunisia.

- **Sophie Bergmann** is from Germany, has a degree in Middle Eastern studies and has been in Tunisia since 2015. Sophie is jointly in charge of Aatik's marketing and commercialization strategy, along with Emma.



## Our activities to date

From December 2015 to March 2016, Aatik co-ran a training program for 22 young women from Aroussa in weaving and design techniques, the result being the reinforcement of the women's competencies as well as their increased awareness and engagement in the practice of their rights, both as women and as members of the local workforce.



During this period, Aatik was in charge of the planning (budget, connection and establishment of contacts), implementation (training supervision, project communication), evaluation (reports and budget review) and follow-up on the project (action plan and commercial strategy).

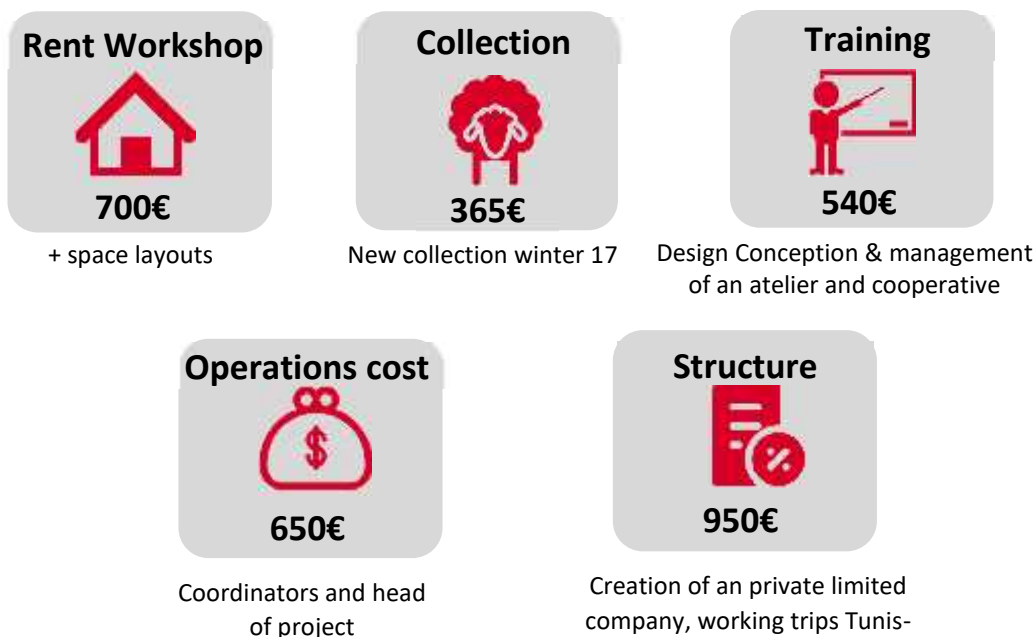
As of March 2016, Emma and Sophie decided to continue working alongside a group of women in Aroussa on a voluntary basis, in order to ensure the sustainability of the project and assist the women in achieving their goal of setting up their very own weaving business.



## How will your money be used?

In order to ensure the continued success of this project, we need to raise 3 200 EUR. This amount will enable us to finance certain activities necessary for the sustainable growth and development of the project.

**Here is how your donations will be allocated:**



## If we surpass our fundraising goal, we will:

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Invest in developing a collection of secondary products based upon woven handicrafts (for instance: handbags, decorative items)

Create a community fund for cultural events and cultural training for the youth of Aroussa.

Recruit someone (from Aroussa) who will be in charge of delivering women's products and purchasing/transportation of primary materials

## They already support us!



The Canadian Embassy in Tunisia



CAWTAR (Center for Arab Women Training and Research) : an organization in the Arab region that is specialized in the promotion of gender equality and women's rights. CAWTAR aims to reduce gender inequalities so as to create better conditions for sustainable development in the Arab world.



Rayhana Association for Women in Jendouba: A collective space for women and young girls in Jendouba to express themselves freely as well as participate and take on greater responsibilities in a non-profit space that offers ongoing training as well as cultural and recreational activities.



Lab'ESS: organization for the capacity building/reinforcement of Tunisian associations and project holders working in social entrepreneurship.

## They are talking about us!

Jamaity : <http://jamaity.org/2016/02/aatik/>

World Bank: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/fr/comment/reply/2258#comment-form>



## To follow Aatik:

<https://www.facebook.com/aatik.project>

## Counterparties:

### Level #1 : 300€

Small personalized kilim (1m<sup>2</sup> - dimensions can be specified according to preference) (delivery 15-30 days after completion of crowdfunding campaign)

You choose the name for one of the rugs in the new Fall/Winter collection

+ bookmark with kilim pattern

+ e-postcard of the region with traditional recipe from the women of Aroussa

+ a thank you on our Facebook page

### Level #2: 100€

A « kilim » keychain (delivery 15 days after completion of crowdfunding campaign)

+ bookmark with kilim pattern

+ e-postcard of the region with traditional recipe from the women of Aroussa

+ a thank you on our Facebook page

### Level #3: 50€

A bookmark with kilim pattern (delivery 15 days after end of crowdfunding campaign)

+ e-postcard of the region and a traditional recipe from the women of Aroussa

+ a thank you on our Facebook page

### Level #4: 30 EUR

A traditional recipe from the women of Aroussa

+ an e-postcard of the region

+ a thank you on our Facebook page

### Level #5: 15 EUR

An e-postcard of the region

+ a thank you on our Facebook page

### Level #6: 5 EUR

A thank you on our Facebook page