




**CHEESE .HONEY. ARGAN.
SAFFRON & MORE...**

COOPERATIVE STORIES FROM THE HIGH ATLAS OF MOROCCO





Global
Diversity
Foundation
A world of difference

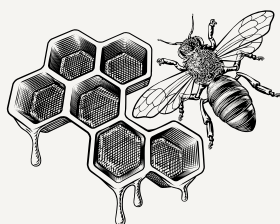




ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

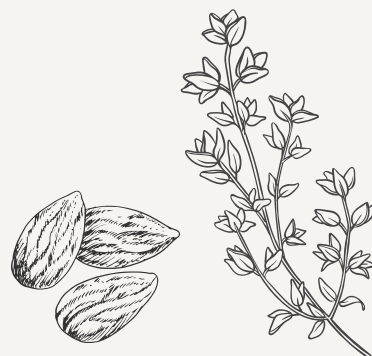
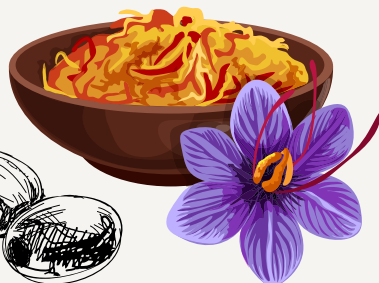
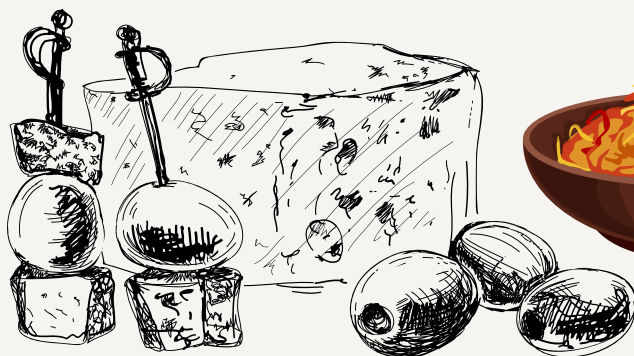
COOPERATIVES

AL OULFA **Naima Lasri**
MANAHIL AL MAGHRIB **Amine Alhabib**
AMAGAR **Fatima Amaguar**
YAMNA **Ittou Ouamou**
TAYTMALINE **Fatima Assahmani**
NISAL ASHKA **Malika Aneks**

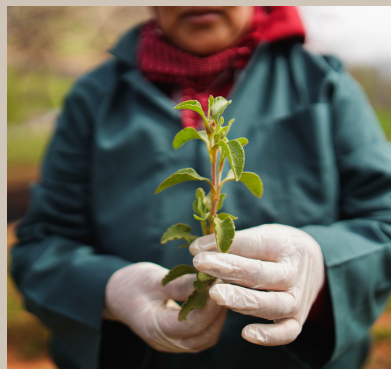


GDF & MBLA

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PHOTOGRAPHS & VIDEOS **Ilyas Nazih**
PROJECT COORDINATION **Mohamed Ouknin**
PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS **Ibtissam Bouseta**
TESTIMONEES **Hafida Mazaoud**
STORY BOOK DESIGN **Eda Elif Tibet**



OUR STORY MOSAIC



GOOD FOOD COMES FROM GOOD PEOPLE

Global Diversity Foundation

AND

Moroccan Biodiversity & Livelihoods Association

GOAT CHEESE

AL OULFA COOPERATIVE



MAKING OF GOAT CHEESE



GOATS.MILK.CHEESE.WOMEN.INNOVATION.TOURISM
AL OULFA COOPERATIVE
Narrator: Naima Lasri

أجبان لالة تكرر كوست
تعاونية الألفة النسوية لإنتاج الجبن

AJBANE LALLA TAKERKOUST
COOPERATIVE FÉMÉNE ALLOULFA
FABRICATION DU FROMAGE
N° AGREMENT L P L. 21.08.17
الهاتف: 06.94.52.16.28

NAIMA LASRI

PRESIDENT

It used to work at a pharmacy in Lalla Takerkoust. Young people used to bring me their CVs so I could help them secure interviews. I also used to volunteer for several NGOs, where I got to establish a broad network. These experiences inspired me to found this cooperative in 2011 with seven young women. My aim was to create job opportunities in the region.

Most of the cooperatives I have seen are managed in a totalitarian manner. The president bosses around instead of leading, motivating or inspiring their workers. They attend training workshops yet will not share their learnings with their team members. Some of them copy a corporate style and apply capitalist strategy to their cooperatives with no plans to meet social needs. These observations showed me what I did not want our cooperative to be like. Here, we have created an egalitarian environment in which we all work together to meet the cooperative's shared goals.



Here, we take care of each other and give endless care to the Alpine goats we raise and breed. Our goats are the origin, future and face of the cooperative. These goats are our first priority; they need to be loved and taken care of in order to produce high-quality milk. We don't sell female goats, but we do generate income by selling male goats to goat breeders.

We decided to work on cheese production with the goal to create cheese tourism in the region, so that tourists can visit and discover our cheesemaking process. I am happy and proud to say that we have become a landmark of Lalla Takerkoust. People now come to the region mostly to visit our cooperative and to buy cheese from us.







Our region's economy is based on agriculture and tourism. We wanted to work in both sectors. We have visited different successful cooperatives that work in prickly pear valorisation, argan, dairy products and more. We produce more than 90% of the goats' food in our fields without chemicals. Besides the women who work within the cooperative, we hire seasonal women to harvest the fields instead of using harvesting machines. That way, we can help the community and move its economy forward. We have hired only women, as it is not easy nor safe for them to travel or to harvest in other rural communities, unlike men who have higher chances in securing similar jobs for higher wages. Here we prioritise only the women .



At first, we had training sessions on the production of fresh cheese with a German NGO's Senior Expert Service. After six years of working with them, we then decided to be trained extensively in ripened cheese production. We are now trying to produce artisanal gouda and camembert. However, we are not yet able to produce refined cheese on a large scale as we still lack the right equipment. Consumers love the different types of fresh cheese that we are producing, but they are also asking us to produce old varieties of cheese. We have created a new ripened cheese receipt by combining two types of world known cheese; camembert and chèvre rondelles. We hope we will be able to patent the formulation and method of our very own unique recipe.



“What makes our Goat Cheese unique is a deep dive into the olive oil, herbs and pepper that are cultivated solely in the High Atlas.”



تعاونية الإنتاج الزراعي والتسويق
Coopérative Al Oulla pour la Production et la Commercialisation
du fromage frais

Fromage artisanal à base de
lait de chèvre
Fêta aromatisé à l'huile d'olive et aux herbes



الرقم: 21/08/17

www.aloullacoop.com

تلفون: 044 527428

رقم:

Date de production:

380 ml





Our fresh cheese has a thick, creamy texture and it doesn't have the robust aroma and flavour found in goat cheese in the Moroccan market. We improved the acidity of the cheese, so it would not have a sour taste. We take into consideration all the feedback we receive from our clients; we have made the texture creamier and reduced the acidity, as most consumers requested.



أجبان لالة تكرر كوست

تعاونية الألفة النسوية لإنتاج الجبن

AJBANE LALLA TAKERKOUST
COOPERATIVE FEMÉENINE ALOULFA
FABRICATION DU FROMAGE
N° AGREMENT L P L. 21.08.17
الهاتف: 06.94.52.16.28



Our GDF & MBLA team with Cooperative members and tourists.

HONEY & AMLOU

MANAHIL AL MAGHRIB COOPERATIVE



HONEY & AMLOU



HONEY.AMLOU.TRADITION.MODERNITY.DIVERSITY.
NARRATOR: MANAHIL AL MAGHRIB

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a yellow honeycomb frame. A single bee is on the honeycomb. The background is blurred, showing the hand and fingers.

AL HABIB

PRESIDENT

Our parents used to be traditional beekeepers, so we have learnt and taken up the torch from them. Thanks to extensive training workshops provided by the local prefecture, we have learnt more about modern beekeeping. The cooperative came into existence in 2016 when we decided to be more organised and move the bees from traditional beehives into more advanced ones.

We have fifteen beekeeper adherents and twenty-three partner beekeepers. In the beginning, we only produced three local types of honey, including Euphorbia, Carob and Multi-Floral Honey. Now we have expanded to produce Eucalyptus, Thyme and Orange Honey. We move the beehives to different regions where these plants are widespread in order to produce new varieties. We also produce Amlou from local almonds and honey, and it is simply delicious.

Even though we modernised honey production, we still keep and honour beekeeping traditions. When a member of the community wants to start beekeeping or is not fortunate to keep their bees alive, we provide them with healthy and productive bee colonies so they can start or restart their businesses. When we harvest honey, it is a must to share some of it with our neighbours. Traditionally, our ancestors used to forbid the harvest of honey at the end of July of each year and they call it the “Antra Phase.” Science has explained that this practice is implemented because the queen bee reduces her rate of laying eggs. Following this traditional method makes it possible to avoid a lay break for months during the high season.







The quality of our products starts with investing in human resources. We have a highly-skilled and educated team who love this craft and are eager to provide the best honey.

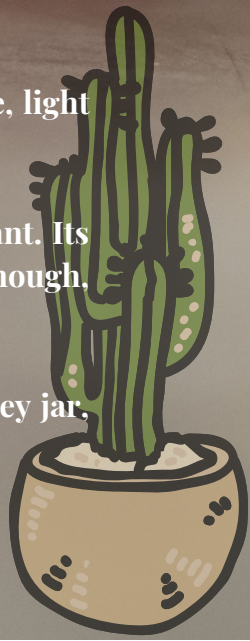




Euphorbia honey is known for its delicious flavour with a spicy, strong aftertaste, light red colour and distinct odour that isn't in the raw plant itself.

Carob Honey is known for its dark red colour and has the same odour as the plant. Its odour is very strong and people might think the taste would be strong as well, although, it is sweet and has a very light flavour.

Thyme honey has a strong odour that you can smell as soon as you open the honey jar, making it easy to distinguish from other types of honey.





We don't have a typical day as every honey is harvested differently. From January to March, we naturally raise the bees, feed them, and inspect the hives once a week to see if they are healthy. These three months are critical for the productivity and welfare of bees, as they have gone through stressful and difficult conditions, facing cold, rain and fewer flowers to feed on.



Honey is sacred in Moroccan households and still seen as a luxurious food that can be used only for medicinal purposes. We need to produce more honey, so the price will decrease and be more affordable for Moroccan families. Honey should be included in our daily diet, to be used in different recipes. I hope we will reach this point very soon in the future. We also produce Amlou using honey, as well as local almonds, and it is simply delicious.

Many young members of our community joined us, learnt the craft and benefited from many technical workshops. We are proud that some of our previous adherents have left the cooperative and started their own business in beekeeping, and they are now financially secure.











Emergency



Power



OFF



Cleanup







Amlooi

Instant Noodle Seasoning



Amlou

Préparé à base de l'Huile d'Argan et Miel.

aux Amandes

Poids
500g

SAFFRON & MORE

AMAGUAR COOPERATIVE

SAFFRON & THYME



SAFFRON. THYME. EMPOWERMENT. PIONEERS.
AMAGUAR COOPERATIVE
Narrator: Fatima Amaguar

**"I became what I am today,
through what I have chosen
to give back to this region."**

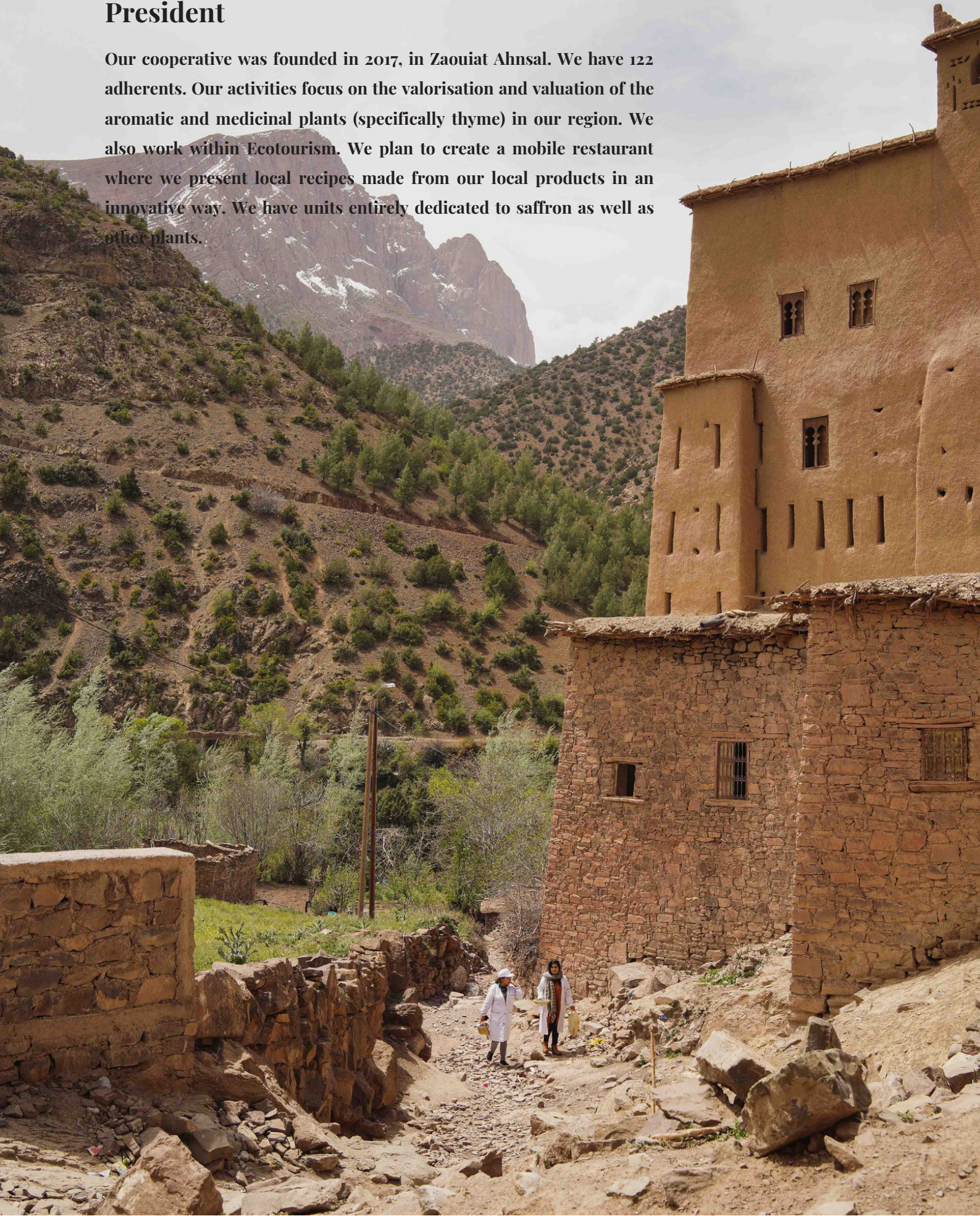
Fatima Amaguar



FATIMA AMAGUAR

President

Our cooperative was founded in 2017, in Zaouiat Ahnsal. We have 122 adherents. Our activities focus on the valorisation and valuation of the aromatic and medicinal plants (specifically thyme) in our region. We also work within Ecotourism. We plan to create a mobile restaurant where we present local recipes made from our local products in an innovative way. We have units entirely dedicated to saffron as well as other plants.



We are the first cooperative in Zaouiat Ahnsal. We were a group of five girls with high school and university degrees who didn't have the luxury to travel from our rural village to the city in order to look for a job, internship or even to attend interviews.

By founding this cooperative, we created working positions for ourselves instead of seeking them somewhere else, and we encouraged women to join us and generate income for themselves and their families. We positively made use of the human potential of our region.

The cooperative became a starting point for many girls, especially those from the younger generation. I started this project after I finished my bachelor's degree. Today, I have a master's degree in tourism and I work as a tourism manager.

In less than four years, our cooperative created and led by women exceeded all our expectations. We have reached all the goals we had originally set for ten years. This progress and success are primarily due to good governance and the perseverance of women. We worked hard to establish a name, and now the earnings of our women surpass their husbands working in the same area. We also schedule listening sessions, where we help solve the problems women face, whether they are within the cooperative or outside.

The daily life of women in our cooperative has not changed; we would never turn their world upside down. They have prior responsibilities in their homes, and they also work on their own time to clean and dry plants before delivering them to the cooperative. They finish the rest of the work in the cooperative's units, where they stay for two to three hours. The cooperative is a place where women can take a breather and escape the pressure of life.









We have permission from the High Commission for Water and Forests to collect wild thyme in a designated area. To preserve the biodiversity and prevalence of this species, we have created a nursery where we grow thyme for transplanting. Additionally, local authorities have reached out to us to train fourteen other cooperatives from the Azilal region on how to grow, harvest and process saffron.



Our cooperative doesn't want to sell women's struggles and indigence; we only sell high-quality products. We want to be known for what we make and not what we face in life. Our product identity comes from the climate of the region, the quality of water flowing from Ouad Ahensal spring and our practices of production. I want people to buy our products because they are the best, not because they sympathise with me as a struggling rural woman. People know that cooperatives are far away from the corporate world, and we are known for our sincerity, equity and solidarity.







The quality of saffron depends on the altitude where it is grown. It needs to be cultivated at a high altitude, at least 600 metres above the sea. Our region is 1800 metres above the sea, which elevates the quality of our saffron.



الزعفران النقي
Safran Pur
saveur et bien-être

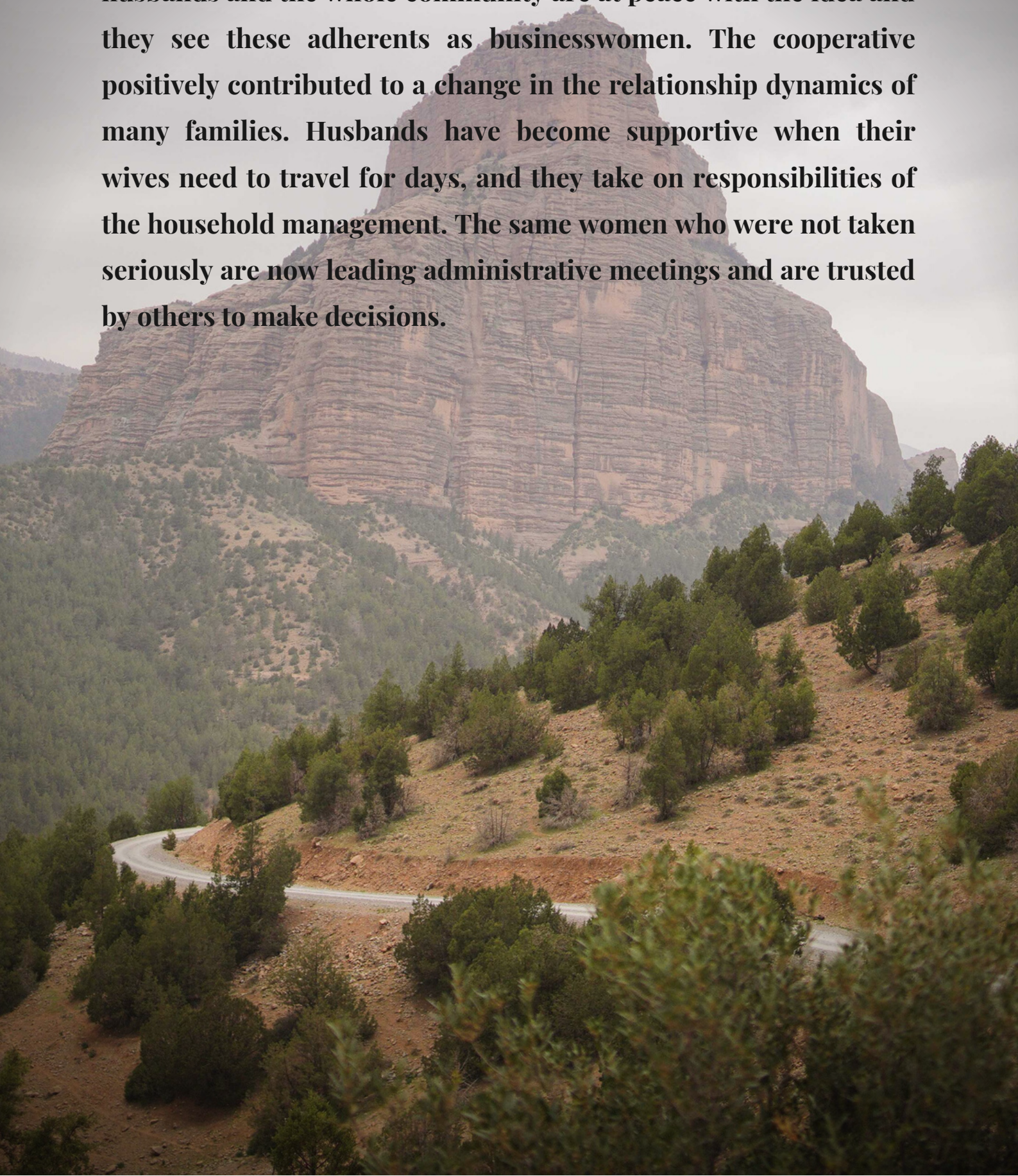
5g

Amaguar

GEO PARC
M'GOUN
Unité de paysage

MAROC

Before the cooperative, it was culturally unacceptable for women to travel alone or to have a say in many aspects of their life. Authoritative figures would not take women seriously. Now their husbands and the whole community are at peace with the idea and they see these adherents as businesswomen. The cooperative positively contributed to a change in the relationship dynamics of many families. Husbands have become supportive when their wives need to travel for days, and they take on responsibilities of the household management. The same women who were not taken seriously are now leading administrative meetings and are trusted by others to make decisions.



I am proud that I am from Zaouiat Ahnsal.

I am not the same Fatima that I was before creating this cooperative. Through this venture, I learnt much more than what I learnt in academia.

When I was young, I was kind of ashamed of where I came from and would always wish I was born somewhere else. When I was a student, I would present myself by saying that I was from the Beni Mellal region, as I didn't want to be associated with poverty and difficult conditions. This cooperative truly changed my perspective on life by making me embrace my roots and feel proud of my origins.





HERBS

NISAE ASKA COOPERATIVE



المبادرة الوطنية للتنمية البشرية
Initiative Nationale pour le Développement Humain

وحدة تثمين الأعشاب العطرية و الطبية
بجماعة آيت امحمد

UNITÉ DE VALORISATION DES PLANTES AROMATIQUES ET
MÉDICINALES
A LA COMMUNE D'AIT M'HAMMED

جمعية أسكا
للنساء و الطفل



We started as a non-profit organisation who would collect wild plants for others for free or for very little. Thanks to a partnership with a foundation in Marrakesh, we learned how to create a nursery for the local plants. We were also funded by the National Human Development Initiative (INDH) in order to build an essential oil distillation unit, which other partners helped us equip. To operate this unit, we had to create a cooperative to help the women of the region of Ait Mhamed village in the region of Azilal. Currently, we deliver the plants we grow in the nursery to local farmers, to promote regeneration of local plant species and to preserve biodiversity in the region.

Most of the women of the community used to weave rugs in their homes and sell them. However, it might take months to sell one rug. These women's relationship with plants is a long one, as they used to collect plants to naturally dye the yarns that would be used to weave the rugs. We use walnut tree stump and eucalyptus to get an orange colour, mint for yellow and rosemary and lavender for grey and purple.









Women work in shifts; those working in the mornings collect plants, dry and package them, while the afternoon workers are stationed in one of the NGO programs. One example is the Career Progression Program, where senior rug weavers are paid to teach the younger generation this craft. We have mobilised the same women to cultivate and harvest Saffron, which is then packaged and commercialised by the cooperative.

We also work with independent women who are not members of the cooperative. We hire them to collect wild plants and dry them in their own houses, and we pay them per kilogram they deliver. We audit the independent workers to see if they apply the right techniques within biodiversity conservation practices.

A cooperative for me is self-abnegation, meaning we are all equal. I don't act as a boss and that I am not designated for certain tasks. I am the one who leads them to the forest to collect herbs, and I would spend my whole day in the cooperative doing the same tasks. I would not want anyone to feel less special.

We decided to work only with women, as they are the ones who need to be empowered. Men can travel to the city, have more chances to secure a job and can diversify their income. Also, most men in my region would want quick money, thus they might not follow the plant harvesting rules without harming the biodiversity and environment.

The cooperative raised awareness of the different ways of using our local and endemic plants. We used to use thyme only to relieve stomach pain or to season and preserve Smen (preserved butter). Besides the tisane that our cooperative is producing, most of the families in the village are now developing their own herbal tea blend using plants like thyme, mint, marjoram, artemisia and sage. We hope in the future we will have a whole variety of herbal blends and add value to these plants.













safra

safra

تعاونية نساء أسكا أيت محمد
Coopérative NISAE ASKA
الزعفران الحر
Safran Pur
زعفران حر طبيعي 100% للأطبخ الكبير الأوسط الصغير

تعاونية نساء أسكا أيت محمد
Coopérative NISAE ASKA
2g
غرام
الزعفران الحر
Safran Pur
زعفران حر طبيعي 100% للأطبخ الكبير الأوسط إقليم أربال - المغرب

safra

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تعاونية نساء أسكا أيت محمد
Coopérative NISAE ASKA
الزعفران الحر
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غرام
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Safran Pur
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تعاونية نساء أسكا أيت محمد
Coopérative NISAE ASKA
100% NATURAL
الزعفران
an Pur
زعفران حر طبيعي 100% للأطبخ الكبير الأوسط الصغير

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الزعفران الحر
Safran Pur
زعفران حر طبيعي 100% للأطبخ الكبير الأوسط الصغير



The cooperative made me develop personally and professionally and I believe this applies to all the ladies working with me. If we were having a conversation just five years ago, I would not be able to complete one sentence; I was very shy and lacked confidence. When I sought funding from INDH, I didn't follow a charity approach. I was not crying and begging for help and funding as some unfortunately do. I followed a logical business approach by showing that we have potential in the region, that my team has the know-how and that we will be able to raise the 30% of the project budget.





ALMONDS & MORE

TAYTMATINE COOPERATIVE







Walnut, olive and almond trees here were planted by our ancestors, some of them dating back to 300 years. We take care of them on a daily basis and do our best to share them with the rest of the world.

We were seven young girls from the region of Ait Atab who decided to create this cooperative in 2011 after we all obtained our academic degrees and we had no choice but to go back to our homes. We were the first all-women cooperative in the region, and we have faced many challenges and difficulties. We struggled to recruit women from the region because it was new for them and they needed time to familiarise themselves with the concept of what we aspire to do in the region.

For five years we were working as a service cooperative, providing consulting to farmers in the region. We organised campaigns to raise awareness about agriculture, teach the correct method to harvest olives, regenerative practices to revive their lands and more. In 2015, we pivoted from providing services and we decided to create our own products. We then started thinking of the whole production chain: which products to sell, the packaging, and prices.

We started producing olive oil and almonds, two local products that are known for their high quality. Thanks to many expositions we developed a reputation and then we decided to expand our product range. We now offer walnuts, walnut oil, almond oil, sesame oil and more. We have a large range but need help in commercialisation, especially online. My team and I have an adequate network, but we don't know how to communicate our needs.

We benefited from the cooperative financially, but the immaterial gain was worth more than the material. We were introduced to new ideas and perspectives, learned how to express our ideas and needs clearly and we got a chance to develop personally as well as professionally. Working in a cooperative teaches you how to seek happiness in helping others and in being united. This cooperative made me realise, contentment and success for me are to have a positive impact on my community and to be a role model for the people around me.

Being a rural cooperative makes us different from those in the city because we have the credibility that our product is from this region and our land. We don't buy it in rural markets and proceed to condition it. Having a cooperative of all rural women from Ait Atab means patience, persistence, strength, reliability and resistance.

خروج
←



My parents were very supportive and always encouraged me to keep growing the cooperative and to not give up. If it weren't for the cooperative, I would have lost my mind when I lost both my parents. I lost one support system, but I had another in my cooperative family. The cooperative taught me how to deal with and manage life crises. It gave me purpose in life, and I couldn't shut myself off from my community and abandon those who needed me.

I live far from the cooperative, so I am always the first one to wake up as I need to commute there. I then pick up the team and take them with me to the cooperative. Each one then resumes her work; one picks the almonds while another one is in charge of packaging and so on. We take breaks where we chat to break the routine and discuss any challenges we are facing.

I try my best to create a positive environment with no tension, so when I see two women who are not on the best terms, I stay objective and neutral and try to understand the nature of the conflict. I encourage them to speak their minds and don't leave the room until we find a solution. We are a family; we disagree but we are always there for each other. A member of the cooperative just lost her mom and the whole team and I are arranging the funeral and doing our best to be there for her.

We knew we were selling a high-quality product but our packaging wasn't reflecting this. We imported packaging from Italy, and we were given many different choices. We wanted an earth tone, a beige reminded us of almonds and walnuts, and a green that symbolised the trees. We also wanted to honour and portray the woman behind these products. It is for this reason that our logo shows a modest rural Atabi woman with her Hayek (traditional Moroccan clothes) and Negab (traditional face cover). The green hands that embrace the woman portray that nature and this cooperative are uplifting the women of our regions.





زيتون آيت اعصاب
ZOUYOUT
AIT ATTAB
HUILE D'OLIVE
vierge extra
TERRAIRE DU MAROC
Extraction à froid
750 ml

زيتون آيت اعصاب
ZOUYOUT
AIT ATTAB
زيت الزيتون البكر الممتازة
HUILE D'OLIVE
vierge extra
TERRAIRE DU MAROC
Extraction à froid
750 ml

زيتون آيت اعصاب
ZOUYOUT
AIT ATTAB
HUILE D'OLIVE
vierge extra
TERRAIRE DU MAROC
Extraction à froid
750 ml















COUSCOUS & ZMITTA

YAMNA COOPERATIVE



ITTO OUAMOU

President

My work with National Mutual Aid inspired me to create this cooperative with seven women in late 2015. We have twenty adherents and fifteen beneficiaries who work to produce our large variety of couscous products. Corn, wheat, barley, oats, millet, madder, quinoa, carob, jujube, and many other grains and plants are used in our recipes and products.

Men used to oppose their wives joining the cooperative, and these women lacked many of their basic rights. Thanks to the cooperative and couscous, they became independent and confident.

Women are now able to provide for themselves and their kids, and they are no longer intimidated by the community. They can go to the weekly souk (market) whenever they want to buy what they need. I consider all of the girls I have taught and still teach to be my daughters. They are my family and I want them to be successful and financially independent.





We have chosen Couscous and Zmita to preserve our culinary heritage. To prepare the Zmita, we clean the wheat grains, toast them in a clay pan, grind them, and then we add other ingredients such as sesame and almonds. The consumer then can mix it with olive oil, sugar or honey.





Cooperative Fimalina YEMMA
Coopcoop
Zaouiat Oaia
زاوية الشيخ
التعاونية التأسيسية يا مة

زميطة ZMITTA

الترخيص الصحي
MA
PAC.63.26121

الكوبان: اللون الفصح، الطعم حلو، كاربوك، الجيدان
الشفافية (الكوي - الكوي) (Pak. Epato - الحصى، الترفقة، الكندة)

Feb: 01/04/2021 Exp: 01/04/2022
Poids: 500 g Prix: 30.00 Dhs

العنوان: حي ابو زنتة - ا. رقم الدار 3 فوق وكالة تمويل الفلاح القرى الفلاحي زاوية الشيخ
البريد الإلكتروني: cooperative.yemma@gmail.com : الهاتف: 0687.16.00.56 - 0687.00.24.13









Couscous is team work it is our culture

We work in teams of at least seven women, with the one in charge of the Guesaa (traditional clay bowl) as the leader. The leader gradually sprays water on the flour and mixes it, the other four women start rolling it with their hands on a specific coarse plate. They then return it to the leader, who rolls it to see if it needs further rolling. The couscous is then handed to the sixth woman with a sieve with small holes, what is strained in the sieve is then passed to a sieve with medium pores. The seventh woman repeats the same process, but only what has been sieved through the medium holes is kept. The couscous granules need to be steamed and then dried using machines, but traditionally wedry it under the sun. One team of six or seven women produces up to one hundred kilograms of couscous every day, with drying taking up to one or two days.

Couscous has cultural value and significance, thus it's traditionally prepared in a joyful and loving environment. We don't prepare it in a silent atmosphere, we sing and recite poems praising and thanking God for his grace and mercy. We repeat something like "Oh God bless us with your grace and grant us with your honour, whatever the almighty grants us cannot be taken by the powerless human."









Couscous is not just a meal for us, it is our identity

It has been with us through different occasions and delineates our lives from beginning to end. In Sebou or Aqiqah (baptism on the seventh day after birth), we celebrate the newborn baby with couscous. It is a must in circumcision ceremonies, we gather around it during Eid and holidays, and we serve it at engagement parties and weddings to bless the new couple. Even on sad occasions, couscous brings people together and helps them mourn their loss while also remembering, honouring and praying for the deceased.



HIGH ATLAS FOOD MARKET

"THE SPOT" GUELIZ / 22 MAY 2021







Global
Diversity
Foundation
A world of difference

