

Friday, December 20, 2024



- Home
- NEWS ▾
- ANALYSIS
- OPINION
- BUSINESS ▾
- SOCIAL
- RELIGION
- ENTERTAINMENT ▾
- ENVIRONMENT
- TECHNOLOGY
- SCIENCE
- HEALTH
- ABOUT EURASIA REVIEW ▾
- CONTACT
- NEWSLETTER



Women’s empowerment workshop in Talat-N-Mimoun; October 2024.

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Achieving Dreams Through Sewing: An Empowerment Success Story – OpEd

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How can empowerment create transformational change in the lives of women who believe they cannot achieve their goals? A true empowerment success story is currently underway in the Moroccan village of Talat-N-Mimoum. This village's journey with the High Atlas Foundation (HAF) began with an empowerment workshop aimed at facilitating women's discussions of difficult and often hard to talk about issues and emotions including stress, trauma, resiliency, and self-love.

Over the course of the four-day workshop that took place in July 2024, the women of Talat-N-Mimoum were able to discuss these topics freely without fear of judgment. This allowed them to uncover and understand more about themselves and their short- and long-term goals to reach the futures they dream of. For Talat-N-Mimoum, these women dreamed of creating a cooperative in which they could work together and produce income-earning products that they feel proud of. They expressed that sewing was of high interest to them as a potentially productive activity to establish their cooperative around, and, from there, their journey moved beyond the four-day workshop into a wholly transformative process towards economic independence and a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

HAF also worked with the women of Talat-N-Mimoum to provide them with useful resources for cooperative building and management. This included leadership training, management skills, and financial education and skills. Now, just a few months after the original empowerment workshop, the women have officially and legally established their cooperative. HAF has also provided the community with three shelters to house the cooperative's activities, two shelters for sewing and one as a space for children to gather. Additionally, a bathroom is also in the process of being provided for the future.

Fortunately, this village's success has intersected with the charitable intentions of two university students in the Netherlands, Isa and Davide. Isa and Davide, after having visited Morocco many times throughout their lives, began thinking of and fundraising for a project to give back to the communities that

st Masood Azhar and his organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) are once again emerging



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Dear Debashis Chakrabarti, Thank you for your interesting article. It would be very helpful if you provided us with details...

they have come to love. Their idea was to provide Moroccan women with the necessary tools and training to become proficient in sewing, a highly useful and profitable skill.

After connecting with HAF and seeing the needs of the women's cooperative in Talat-N-Mimoun, their project idea has become realized. This past week, sewing machines and sewing tables were delivered and set up in the HAF shelters. Soon, Isa and Davide plan to bring in two instructors to begin the three-month training program that aims to benefit 40 women in the village, importantly including a number of young girls who have already dropped out of school.

After visiting Talat-N-Mimoun, it is clear that the women are eager and excited to learn how to sew and to get their cooperative up and running. This success story is just one example of how important empowerment is in the larger process of community development. Different partners have all come together to ensure the success of these women in leading their own change and achieving their truest goals.



Kaitlyn Waring

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