

Press release

Paris, April 2010

PlaNNet Finance supports the Craftswomen Network in Morocco, in partnership with the Design School of Copenhagen, LaSalle College in Casablanca and Kvininfo.



The NGO PlaNNet Finance in Morocco joins forces with Kvininfo, the Danish centre for Information on gender, equality and ethnicity, the Design School of Copenhagen and the LaSalle College in Casablanca with the goal of improving the socioeconomic situation of the women in the Craftswomen Network in Morocco.

This project, developed within the framework of a “Microfinance Plus” program, includes support in the structuring of cooperatives and reinforcement of the capacities of artisans for the development of new products.

Danish and Moroccan fashion and design students also help around forty women to develop their performance, creativity, and to diversify their products for better market positioning.

“We have joined the PlaNNet Finance project because we wanted to rethink our way of working as designers,” confides Marie, one of the Danish students. “Normally, we work the materials focusing exclusively on aesthetics. Here, our objective is to draw on the traditional know-how of these women and teach them new techniques, develop their creativity, and let their inspiration run wild. During this project, we have learned a lot from these women and their culture, as well as ourselves, and we all want to continue to work on projects like this one.”

Thanks to the support of the students and PlaNNet Finance, the network benefits from management and marketing training, and has promotional materials, such as business cards and a catalogue, at their disposal. All of the women who are members of the Network also benefit from information on the new Moroccan Family Code and training in personal development.

The sale of their products (jewellery, handbags and pillows) in tradeshows has allowed the cooperatives to increase their turnover by 30 to 50% in 2009. Since then, the women have been participating in their household budgets and covering their personal expenses.

38% of them can now save money every month. In addition to the economic impact, married women in the network declare that they have more influence in their families since they contribute to the budget. As for single women, they acquire financial autonomy and a social life thanks to the network without needing to explain themselves.



Saïda Chaâboun, president of the Craftswomen network comments that *“in addition to technical training, the women have developed a remarkable energy in order to overcome all the obstacles with a spirit of solidarity. This network is not only an interest group, but friendship and family bonds are formed between the women.”*

About PlaNet Finance

PlaNet Finance is an organization of international solidarity whose mission is to fight poverty by the development of microfinance in order to improve access to financial services for poor populations who are excluded from them. Based in Paris, PlaNet Finance and its international network are active in nearly 80 countries.

www.planetfinancegroup.org

About the Craftswomen Network:

The Craftswomen Network (CWN) was created on 29 September 2007 in Marrakech, out of the "MENA Women" project, implemented by PlaNet Finance Morocco and financed by the European Commission between 2006 and 2008. The CWN currently groups together 6 production units comprised of 4 associations and 2 cooperatives and 200 members. This group intends to work for the emancipation of female workers through the shared efforts of each member. The CWN tries hard to find suppliers that possess top quality raw materials, to organise training and sensitization sessions in order to stimulate exchanges of knowledge and know-how, and to find commercial opportunities that respect the principles of socially responsible economy.

www.reseaufemmesartisanes.fr.gd

About the Danish Design School (DKDS):

The design school of Copenhagen trains and gives career support for students in the disciplines tied to art, the craft industry and design. The school claims competitive methodology and knowledge at the leading edge of progress, allowing it to benefit from international recognition. DKDS is a partner with PlaNet Finance in Morocco in the implementation of activities tied to the designs and graphics of the "Craftswomen Network" project.

www.dkds.dk

About Kvinfo:

Kvinfo is an organization located in Denmark. Its main role is to be an information and resource centre on research, legislation and history concerning the gender approach and the place of women in society. Kvinfo supervises the "Women Decision making and leadership in the public sphere" program implemented in Morocco so as to participate in the emancipation of Moroccan women in different aspects: Political, social and economical. The Craftswomen Network project makes up a component of this vast program.

www.kvinfo.dk

About the LaSalle College in Casablanca

LaSalle College International, Morocco is a member of the Canadian LaSalle International network. It represents the first Canadian vocational teaching institution to introduce the North American teaching system in French, in Morocco. The LaSalle College makes fashion and interior design students available who bring their knowledge, teach their know-how and make it possible to facilitate exchanges between the artisans and the Danish students.

www.collegelasalle.ma

Press contact:

PlaNet Finance

Marlène Biard

mbiard@planetfinance.org

+33 1 49 21 26 15