

# Negotiation in Practice:

Fieldwork with Agricultural  
Cooperatives in Rural Morocco

A Product of the  
**Salaam Fellowship  
for Conflict Resolution**

Morocco 2019







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# Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The Open Hands Initiative is proud to share with you this collection of works produced during the Salaam Fellowship for Conflict Resolution by our 2019 cohort of Salaam Fellows.

"Negotiation in Practice: Fieldwork with Agricultural Cooperatives in Rural Morocco" is a series of four written products resulting from a day of service-learning conducted in partnership with the High Atlas Foundation in November 2019. Each article is a reflection of lessons learned during the Salaam Fellowship, which was taught by expert trainers from The Bridgeway Group. Fellows worked to apply negotiation and conflict resolution techniques to real challenges faced by rural Moroccan communities. And although part of their final team project, this report is a true effort on behalf of the Salaam Fellows to shine a light on these communities and to raise awareness of their needs on a national and global scale.

I hope these pieces are both insightful and inspiring to you. Please share them with others who may be interested in this cause or in supporting the work of the High Atlas Foundation in ensuring sustainable development for these and other communities across Morocco.

Should you have any questions or comments about this report, the Fellowship or our partners, feel free to reach out to [info@openhandsinitiative.org](mailto:info@openhandsinitiative.org).

Sincerely,



**Jay T. Snyder**

Founder & Chairman  
Open Hands Initiative

# About the Salaam Fellowship

The Salaam Fellowship for Conflict Resolution was a cultural and professional exchange program that brought together globally-focused young people from the U.S. and Morocco to increase mutual respect and understanding between our countries. In partnership with The Bridgeway Group, it equipped participants with critical competencies in conflict resolution and negotiation at both the interpersonal and intergroup levels, examining the cultural implications involved. Through open dialogue, interactive workshops, and real-world application of the material, participants developed a solid foundation in conflict management through a cross-cultural lens.

## Program Beneficiaries

The week-long fellowship was held in Rabat and Marrakesh, Morocco from Oct. 24th to Nov. 3rd and was hosted by the Open Hands Initiative. Twenty-two exceptional fellows aged 18-26 were chosen to participate in the program, bringing backgrounds in international relations, political science, business, public health, communications, and civil society. The 2019 Salaam Fellows are highly ambitious, emerging leaders active in their communities and eager to pursue careers in diplomacy, peacebuilding, and other related fields.

## Curriculum

The program included skills training in conflict mapping and analysis, negotiation and conflict management, effective communication, mediation, stakeholder mapping, and other related topics. This program not only provided intensive hands-on training, but offered opportunities for cultural engagement and exposure to representatives from academia, think tanks, non-profits, and both the public and private sectors. As part of the program, the Salaam Fellows collaborated on a team project to engage with local communities and apply the material learned in the classroom to real-world situations. The result of their teamwork is this report, "Negotiation in Practice: Fieldwork with Agricultural Cooperatives in Rural Morocco."

# The Open Hands Initiative

The Open Hands Initiative is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization dedicated to improving people-to-people understanding and friendship throughout the world. We identify young leaders from a range of backgrounds—media, the private sector, the disability community, artists and musicians—to not only expose them to different cultures but also to deepen their interdependence and respect for one another. Through the sponsorship of exchange programs in the fields of entrepreneurship, health, culture, education, and more, we seek to establish a reservoir of goodwill that can withstand our respective government's policy differences.



# Program Partners

## Bridgeway Group

The Bridgeway Group works in partnership with parties in conflict-affected regions to provide long-term capacity building for the effective, sustainable, and non-violent management of social and community conflict. It is especially committed to supporting parties in under-resourced contexts and to capturing and disseminating lessons learned from their collective efforts. To accomplish this goal, the Bridgeway Group works with individuals and organizations, offering training in negotiation, communication, and peacebuilding skills. The Bridgeway Group strives to provide best practice through coaching, strategic advice, and innovative tools, designed to help transform the negotiation and conflict management cultures of those with whom they work.

## High Atlas Foundation

The High Atlas Foundation (HAF) is dedicated to catalyzing prosperity and endorsing grassroots development with disenfranchised communities throughout Morocco. The HAF aims to empower social groups to identify, implement, and sustain projects that are most beneficial to them. The High Atlas Foundation is a Moroccan association and a U.S. 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2000 by former Peace Corps Volunteers committed to furthering sustainable development. HAF supports Moroccan communities to take action in implementing human development initiatives, and promotes organic agriculture, women's empowerment, youth development, education, and health. Since 2011, the High Atlas Foundation has Consultancy Status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

## Université Internationale de Rabat

The Université Internationale de Rabat (UIR) is a semi-public university based in Salé. Founded in 2009 under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, the institution offers innovative teaching and dual degrees in collaboration with foreign universities, in law, engineering, aeronautics, energy engineering, architecture, business management, and political sciences.





# Couscous and Calendula: Moroccan Women Get Their First Jobs with New Rural Co-operative

**An Op-Ed written by Vikram Balasubramanian, Hasna El Asri,  
John Yildiz, Ivana Bozic, Muhammad El Metmari,  
Salma Rhilane & Cooper Wright**

“While the men kept talking, we kept working.” These words reflect the hard work put in daily by 70-year-old Bushra and other women throughout the headquarters of the Aboughlou Women’s Co-operative, a self-sustaining initiative that empowers women economically and socially through the production of couscous and calendula. When 10 women started the cooperative in 2016, the men in their villages bet on their failure. Today, the co-operative employs 33 women and has a partnership with an international cosmetics company. Nestled in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, the co-operative also sells its products to the local community. Though they make nearly 95 percent of their profit by selling the calendula flower to the international cosmetics company, their true passion and craft is the couscous they make.

The co-operative is for women and by women. The walls are old and the scent of Moroccan gunpowder tea is constant, minty and fragrant. At the storefront, a new glass window showcases last night’s labor: buttery cookies and unique, rare couscous—a Moroccan staple sold for 10 dirhams (1 US dollar per kilo).

The co-operative employs women like 51-year-old Zohra; this is her first job. When her husband passed away 30 years ago, Zohra’s young sons had to drop out of school to provide for the family—at the time, it was unacceptable for a woman to work out of the house. When she started working, her eldest son was against it; it went against tradition and honor. Zohra’s place was framed as relative to the men in her life: in the eyes of society, her employment meant the failure of her sons to provide. In reality, employment was a labor of love for Zohra.

Older women face double discrimination of both gender and age. Moroccan traditions confine women to the house and regards older people as burdens. Society assigns an expiration date to a woman's usefulness. "They think an older woman's job should be to sit at home and pray," Zohra explains. But after three years of working at the cooperative, Zohra has become financially independent and her sons understand the importance of her work. Now *they* ask her for money—not the other way around.

The co-op has elicited a mix of responses from the men in the community, from support to disdain. Like betting on a horse, some men hope the co-op will fail and their presumptions about the role of women in society will be validated. Yet others have been instrumental in empowering the co-op, transporting women to the marketplaces and helping them set up their products for sale. Another member of the co-operative says that her oldest son and husband are proud when people of the neighborhood highlight the fact she is working while they are jobless, bucking cultural norms.



Photo Credit: Kelly Fitzsimmons Photography

Generally in rural Morocco, women face significant and deeply-ingrained societal and economic barriers to empowerment. Largely confined to domestic roles within the home, society expects women to bear and raise children, cook, clean and support their husbands.

While the fight for women's empowerment has been gaining traction worldwide, one key demographic tends to be left behind—the elderly. While 87 percent of Moroccan women aged 15-24 are literate, the number is much lower for elderly and rural communities, particularly in the High Atlas Mountains. Furthermore, *Morocco's 2016 Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Development report* gives no mention of addressing ways to empower older generations of women. Lastly, Morocco World News reports that Morocco is one of the worst countries in the world for people over 60 based on income security, health status, and a disempowering environment.



According to a 2018 report by Age International, inequalities that women face in their everyday lives can continue into older age, and subsequently be inflamed by age discrimination. What's more is that the unpaid labor of older women is often invisible to economic and social data, rendering their efforts, and essentially their existence, unaccounted for. The traditional narrative within the international community focuses on the empowerment of young women to reduce social stigma and provide opportunities, but if entire generations of women are rendered transparent by both their country and the world, how can we say we are truly empowering women?

The multiplier effect of this co-operative is indirectly affecting the future of other female generations in Ourika village: inspired by the Aboughlou Co-operative, four new women's co-operatives have been established in the broader El Haouz region. Providing agency and opportunity to older women resonates even further than the adult and elderly community, inspiring young girls by offering a new role model. The cultural stigma against girls' empowerment in rural areas is being significantly eradicated among people due to small co-operatives led by older women.



Photo Credit: Muhammad El Metmari

These initiatives are an outlet for women to break out of predefined roles in public spaces while providing a space for healing, where their perspectives about their role and value within society shift. Working with the Aboughlou Co-operative is one activity that has liberated women from previously restricted lifestyles. Despite the financial barriers that this co-operative is facing, the women were able to get their business off the ground through small personal contributions, which led them to become a well-established enterprise. Granting women more economic opportunities contributes to increased productivity, increases economic diversification, decreases income inequality, and leads to more inclusive overall economic growth. This, in turn, respects human rights, dignity and the right to work of older generations of women.

"Now that I built my financial independence, I only regret my negative attitude in the past against women going to work," says Zohra.

Zohra explains that her fellow villagers still question the value of an older woman working, asking her "What's the point when you'll just be taking all of your knowledge to the grave?" She shakes her head, explaining that she intends to spread her wisdom instead. When asked about her dreams for her granddaughter, she remarks: "She will finish her studies, no matter what."

This co-operative is just the start of new opportunities for generations of women and needs to serve as an example for future means of intersectional women's empowerment. If Morocco and other countries are serious about enabling older women to work and achieve sustainability, we need to replicate this model and finance similar projects in other communities and contribute to their economic livelihood. We have an opportunity to reach communities that have been historically—and are currently—marginalized and empower women across generations.

The Salaam Fellows are funded and sponsored by the Open Hands Initiative and incorporate Moroccan and American perspectives to conflict resolution and sustainability issues. Learn more at <http://openhandsinitiative.org>.



# Your Support Will Allow Generations of Moroccans to Prosper

**A Donor Funding Request by Hannah Barrett,  
Mohamad El Wahabbi, Omar Faris  
& Joe'Shawn Head**

Thirty minutes outside the prosperous city of Marrakesh, where locals and tourists tap into the heartbeat of the bustling Moroccan metropolis, lies a proud village of Moroccan micro-entrepreneurs nestled in the Atlas Mountains. While their need for water, trees, and access to better health care persists, the High Atlas Foundation has introduced the opportunity for eager community members to pursue sustainable business ventures. The fundamental needs of these communities have not been met, but the High Atlas Foundation (HAF) has sought to uplift rural Moroccan communities through the initiation of sustainable development projects that are driven by self-determined goals.

**We are seeking your assistance on behalf of the High Atlas Foundation to assist them in expanding their critical projects that will propel sustainable economic growth, organic agricultural development, and the empowerment of marginalized communities.**

HAF is a US-based 501(c)3 and a Moroccan-registered nonprofit. In 2018, over 70% of HAF's funding came from grants offered by various national and international governmental entities. The High Atlas Foundation is grateful for the continued belief in its mission, as the nature of government grants has been restrictive in bolstering the foundation's discretionary spending that is crucial to seeing critical projects through and fostering organizational growth and efficiency.

Currently, the entirety of HAF's discretionary funding for the salaries of 22 paid employees in addition to any costs outside of the grant framework is generated through the sale of carbon dividends from trees planted in HAF's development projects. Frankly, this is not enough to sustain HAF growth. They need more funding to cover unanticipated costs for vital projects that grants do not cover.

## **We are asking for your generous contribution of \$100,000 to the High Atlas Foundation to maximize impact for ongoing development and future sustainability projects.**

We believe that a philanthropist such as yourself is capable to strengthen HAF's discretionary budget and increase the organization's reach and efficiency. With your assistance, HAF would be able to finance the salaries of staff to meet its research and advocacy needs and ensure that no existing project goes unfinished in line with its mission of sustainable development.



"I was a helpless widow, raising a son alone, relying solely on seasonal gigs. When Amina [from HAF] showed up one day in our village telling us about the co-operative project, it felt as though she came for our rescue. A true godsend, she worked so hard to bring together the women despite the many challenges, and now we are in a better place, capable of providing the kind of life and education our kids need to live a decent life."

- Mahjouba, Age 65

*Amina is Director of Projects at HAF*

Before HAF intervened, people were considering leaving for the city, and some did. Now the situation is much better. By allowing farmers to plant the forests, providing resources, expertise, and supporting them through the process, the forest is flourishing and it creates income for thousands of families in the area."

- Village leader, Age 70

*Setti Fatma Commune*







Photo Credit: Kelly Fitzsimmons Photography

To put your contribution into perspective, the High Atlas Foundation has been able to help 30 communities across Morocco over the course of 16 years. Since the beginning, they have worked to promote education, public health, and economic development through empowering women and youth and sustainability within rural communities throughout Morocco. Their initiatives and accomplishments include:

- Planting 225,000 fruit saplings whose profits benefit members of the region
- Executing of the Imagine Empowerment workshops aiding over 300 women
- Implementing clean, gender-segregated bathroom facilities for an estimated 17 schools
- Building water systems for drinking which provides adequate, safe drinking water for 9,000 people

The High Atlas Foundation is dedicated to promoting intergenerational growth and sustainability. Your donation will foster prosperity in Morocco for years to come. Thank you in advance for investing in the future of some of Morocco's most underserved communities.

If you have further questions, please contact HAF President, Dr. Yossef Ben-Meir by phone +1(646) 688-2946 or email at [yossef@highatlasfoundation.org](mailto:yossef@highatlasfoundation.org).

Sincerely,

The Open Hands Initiative Salaam Fellows





# From Fruit to Forest: The Impact of Walnut Tree Reclassification in Morocco

**A Policy Brief Co-Authored by Hasnae Bakhouch, John Chappell, Savannah Lane, Elizabeth Pantaleon & Essaadia Zahir**

Farmers in the rural areas in Morocco can plant trees on public lands managed by the High Commission on Water and Forests (HCWF). However, government regulations limit farmers to planting only those trees designated as forestry trees on HCWF land. Although bearing fruit, carob trees are classified as forest trees and have greatly benefited communities in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains and in Morocco's lowland plains. [1] Local ecology prevents carob cultivation at higher elevations, where planting walnut trees is more viable. Farmers cannot plant walnut trees at this higher elevation, however, due to the trees' current classification.

**The HCWF should reclassify walnut trees as forestry trees to allow for their cultivation on HCWF land at higher elevations. The planting of walnut trees would maximize agricultural productivity, advance economic prosperity, and ensure environmental sustainability. Reclassifying walnut trees would maximize farmers' autonomy, contribute to Moroccan rural development, and help combat the effects of climate change.**

## The Problem

With the increasing threat of climate change, rural communities are left vulnerable to the adverse effects of extreme weather patterns. Clear, effective and sustainable environmental and agricultural policies are imperative to support agricultural livelihoods and assist rural communities. The Green Morocco Plan serves as a framework for the advancement of Morocco's largest economic sector, supports modern agriculture and productivity and also improves the living conditions of the small farmer through the combating of poverty in rural areas. [2]

**Sixty-eight percent of Morocco is zoned for agricultural use, which is further divided into utilization classifications, including for forestry and agriculture. [3] Currently, the classification of walnut trees as fruit trees impedes rural development and exacerbates rural-urban inequality. It is in the shared interest of policymakers and rural farmers to reclassify the walnut tree for the sake of Morocco's long-term stability.**

Rural, mountainous regions of Morocco are losing significant economic and environmental benefits from the current classification of walnut trees as fruit trees. Farmers cannot plant walnut trees on land managed by the HCWF [4], even if it is elevated between 800 and 1800 meters, which is favorable for walnut cultivation. [5] This land, therefore, is underutilized.

Reclassification would not require financial resources and would allow those farmers to grow walnuts for sale and contribute to Morocco's transition from low-profit cereal agriculture to high-profit fruit and nut agriculture. Increasing walnut production is also included in the Green Morocco Plan for agricultural development, a key element of Morocco's long-term economic strategy.

## Policy Solutions

Local village leaders in the High Atlas Mountain region, and NGOs such as the High Atlas Foundation [6], agree that the current classification of walnut trees hinders farmers' autonomy and limits walnut cultivation. Farmers cannot plant the tree on HCFW lands where it would otherwise flourish.

**The carob tree has been reclassified from a fruit tree to a forestry tree in the last twenty years and has contributed to agricultural development in much of Morocco due to carob products' high profit margins. [7] Reclassification of the walnut tree would remove limits from the designated planting locations on HCFW land and yield many benefits.**

While the recategorization of walnut trees is a key policy priority, the constraints on walnut cultivation also stem from bureaucratic ambiguity. The Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) plays a critical role in the planting process in designating what trees can be planted and where in regards to the HCWF-designated land. This adds another layer of complexity to the utilization of land management processes, which encompass village leaders, HCWF officials, and Ministry of Agriculture officials, are unclear. Interviews in villages in the Ourika Valley reveal that local stakeholders do not understand land use policy that is directly relevant to their livelihood.

**This policy brief recommends a reclassification of the walnut tree from fruit to forestry to replicate the economic success of the carob cultivation at higher elevations, while also increasing transparency and cooperation between the government and community leaders and organizations to ensure cooperation and understanding and maximize the productivity of the land's resources.**

## Benefits

Cultivating walnut trees on HCWF land would provide many economic benefits to rural farmers.

- *It would reduce urban-rural inequality.* Although inequality remains a challenge that drives migration from rural areas to cities in Morocco, overall poverty levels have decreased in the last decade. Reclassifying walnut trees would help address rural poverty by supplementing farmers' incomes and reduce rural to urban migration.
- *It would provide long-term income opportunities.* Each walnut tree planted has a lifespan of over a century. The trees begin bearing fruit after five to six years, providing a sustainable and renewable source of income for decades.
- *It would encourage international trade.* Morocco's geography affords it convenient access to Europe, which represents the largest import market for walnuts in the world. [8] In 2018, walnuts sold at an average of approximately 8 euros per kilogram in the Spanish market, which Moroccan exporters could access with relative ease. [9] Morocco currently provides 43% of Europe's walnut imports. [10] Farmers who rely on HCWF land cannot currently share the benefits of the walnut trade. They would be able to do so if walnuts were reclassified as forestry trees.
- *It would provide environmental benefits.* Planting walnut trees on HCWF land at higher elevations would contribute to combating climate change and soil conservation. Walnut trees effectively store and capture carbon dioxide emissions, which are a principal cause of climate change. Planting trees also promotes soil conservation and increases the water storage capacity of soil, thereby combating desertification while reducing the impact of droughts and floods. [11]

If HCWF reclassifies walnut trees from fruit to forestry, rural Morocco can benefit in terms of the national economy, rural development and equality, and the environment.

### Sources (Accessed Nov. 2, 2019)

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5. Serrar, Mohamed. "Arboriculture : Le Noyer, Arbre Fruitier Et Forestier." Agriculture du Maghreb, June 24, 2017.
6. See <https://highatlasfoundation.org>
7. Mhirit & Et-Tobi. "Trees Outside Forests."
8. "Exporting Walnuts to Europe." CBI. <https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/processed-fruit-vegetables-edible-nuts/walnuts/>.
9. "Walnuts: Average Price Spain 2013-2018." Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/778373/average-walnut-price-in-spain/>.
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# Leveraging the Success of the Aoughloul Cooperative to Advocate for Women's Empowerment

**A Social Media Campaign Strategy by Assia Elmoudfie,  
Connor Hardy, Mohamed El Firm, Nassim  
El Khou & Salma Ait Taleb**

## Campaign Goals

- 1. Increase Visibility of the Cooperative: Highlight its unique qualities and frame the financial & social impact of the initiative**
- 2. Market Its Products: Couscous, baked goods & aromatics**
- 3. Draw Attention of Potential Partners**
- 4. Create an Easy-to-Use Strategy: Make the campaign easily implemented by the women in the cooperative and reduce dependence on outside actors**

## Target Metrics for Success

- 3000-5000 page visits in the first week of launch
- 700 follows on Instagram (after the creation of an account)
- +300 likes on Facebook (page already exists:  
<https://www.facebook.com/womensaboughloucooperative/>)
- Contact with local news outlets: Enough attention on social media for English- and Arabic-language news outlets to take interest in High Atlas Foundation partnership with Aoughloul Cooperative (Moroccan World News - EN, Hispress - AR, Akhbarona - AR)

## Target Audience

- National and International Donors - corporations and companies (not individuals). For example, OCP Group, Inwi, UNESCO (preserving a cultural heritage practice, women involved are Amazigh)
- Consumers - Moroccans interested in locally and ethically sourced goods, people from the US/Europe who advocate for women's empowerment and want to buy cosmetic/food goods
- Potential Markets - organic specialty stores, cosmetics companies
- Potential Partners - national and international cosmetics companies, tea companies (use of chamomile and other aromatics in teas and foods)

## Hashtags

#empowermentthroughbusiness  
#womensempowerment  
#womenproducers  
#organicwomen  
#madebywomen  
#womanentrepreneur  
#entrepreneur

#madeinmorocco  
#organicmorocco  
#couscousmorocco  
#organiccouscous  
#locallysourced  
#localorganic  
#aromaticsforempowerment

#atlaswomenentrepreneurs  
#aboughloucooperative  
#humansofaboughlou  
#aromaticsforempowerment

#organicfood  
#empoweredorganic  
#couscousforhealth

#moroccanmade  
#moroccomade  
#madeinmorocco

## Platforms

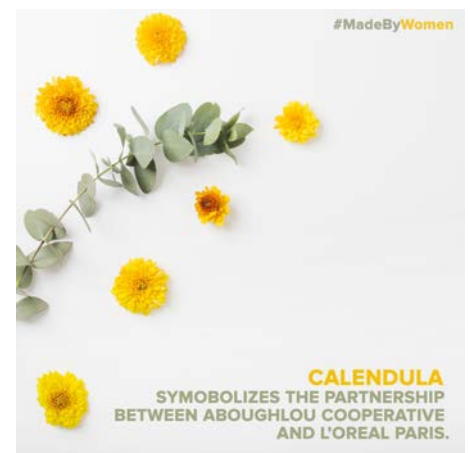
Instagram, Facebook, Blog

## Instagram Stories

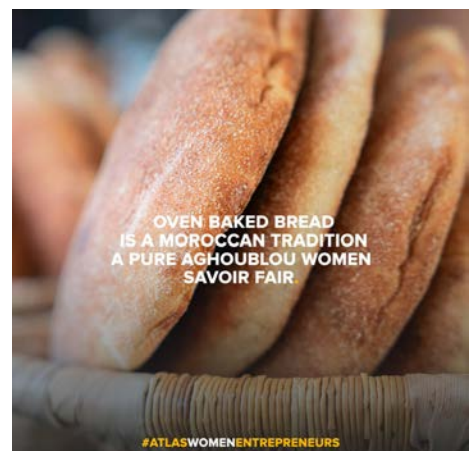
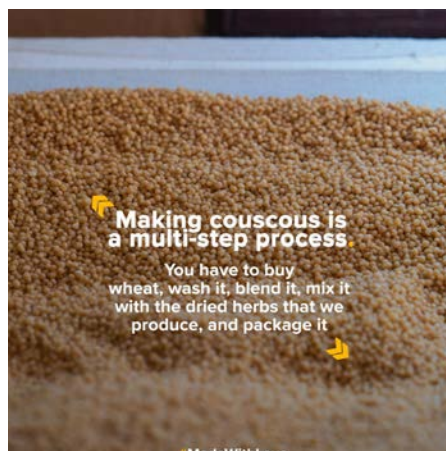
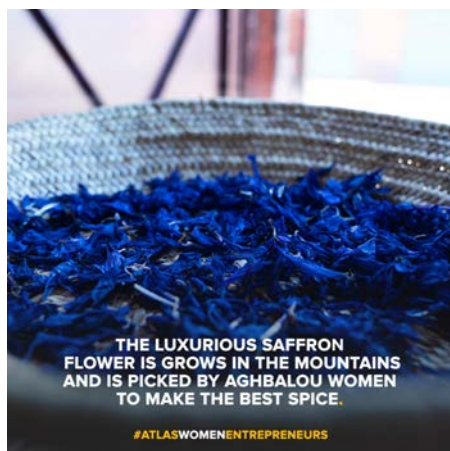
### From a Hello in 2016 to a partnership with an international cosmetics company in 2019 (Youssef Ben-Meir)

- I joined the cooperative [in 2018]. I left when I was pregnant and I was always welcome to come back once my daughter grew up.
- The stigma we faced from the village community, their certainty that our project would fail, only made us work harder.
- We were strangers and we became a family. This is not only about financial development, but also maintaining sisterhood and the strong bonds between women.
- Since joining the Aboughlou Cooperative, I've become my own breadwinner.
- In the future, we hope to further develop our business and introduce our products to the international market.
- Making couscous is a multi-step process. You have to buy wheat, wash it, blend it, mix it with the dried herbs that we produce, and package it.

## Targeting Potential Partners



## Product Marketing

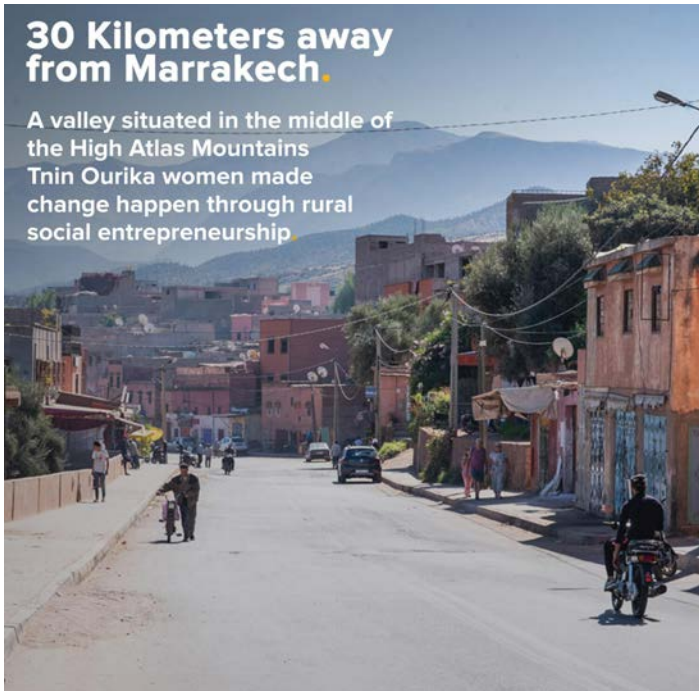




# Increasing Visibility & Finding Donors

## 30 Kilometers away from Marrakech.

A valley situated in the middle of the High Atlas Mountains Tnin Ourika women made change happen through rural social entrepreneurship



**YOUNG AND OLD  
RURAL AND URBAN  
LET'S ALL WORK TOGETHER  
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

#ATLASWOMENENTREPRENEURS



**THE STIGMA WE FACED FROM THE VILLAGE  
COMMUNITY, THEIR CERTAINTY THAT OUR PROJECT  
WOULD FAIL, ONLY MADE US WORK HARDER.**

COOPERATIVE MEMBER



#HUMANSOF.ABOUHQLOU

**IN THE FUTURE, WE HOPE TO FURTHER  
DEVELOP OUR BUSINESS AND INTRODUCE OUR  
PRODUCTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET.**

COOPERATIVE MEMBER



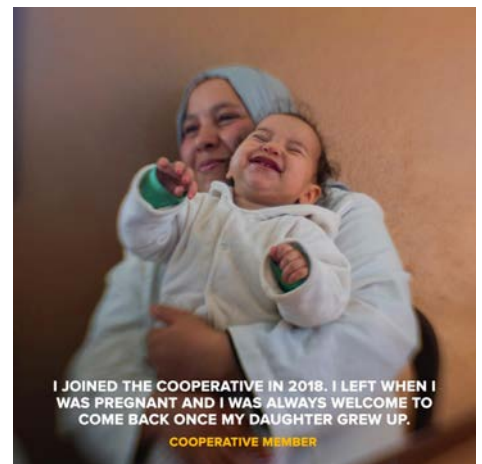
**PARTNERSHIP IS ALSO ABOUT  
DEVELOPING SKILLS AND  
AWARENESS RAISING.**

#ATLASWOMENENTREPRENEURS



**WE WERE STRANGERS AND WE BECAME A FAMILY. THIS  
IS NOT ONLY ABOUT FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT, BUT  
ALSO MAINTAINING SISTERHOOD AND THE STRONG  
BONDS BETWEEN WOMEN.**

COOPERATIVE MEMBER



**I JOINED THE COOPERATIVE IN 2018. I LEFT WHEN I  
WAS PREGNANT AND I WAS ALWAYS WELCOME TO  
COME BACK ONCE MY DAUGHTER GREW UP.**

COOPERATIVE MEMBER



# Blog Post Modules

## Week 1: Introducing Aboughlou Cooperative

The Aboughlou Women's Cooperative started in 2016 through a partnership between a group of women from villages surrounding Tnin Ourika area and the High Atlas Foundation. The cooperative produces and sells different agricultural products and aromatic herbs, and recently established a partnership with an international cosmetics company. The cooperative is rooted in women's empowerment through financial and entrepreneurial independence.

رأت تعاونية ابوغلوا للنساء النور سنة 2016 عن طريق شراكة بين نساء قرى مجاورة لإثنين اورিকা و مؤسسة الأطلس الكبير. تنتج وتسوق التعاونية الكسكس والأعشاب الجبلية العطرية و تم مؤخرا عقد شراكة مع شركة لوريال باريس. يكمن جوهر التعاونية في تمكين المرأة من خلال الاستقلال المالي وريادة الأعمال.

### How Does the Aboughlou Cooperative Help Women?

Through the Aboughlou Cooperative's partnership with the High Atlas Foundation, women have access to a variety of workshops and resources. Women take part in literacy workshops two days a week, receive specialized training in women's empowerment through the High Atlas Foundation Imagine Workshops, and learn together how to effectively collaborate as a team to work towards their goal of improving women's social and economic conditions.

كيف تساهم تعاونية ابوغلو في تمكين المرأة؟  
تخول الشراكة بين التعاونية و مؤسسة الأطلس الكبير تأطير النساء عبر تنظيم ورشات. تشارك النساء في ورشات لمحو الأمية يوميين في الأسبوع، ويتلقون تدريباً متخصصاً في تمكين المرأة من خلال تمرين تخيل لمؤسسة الأطلس الكبير، وتتعلمن معاً كيفية العمل بفعالية كفريق واحد من أجل تحقيق هدفهن الأسمى المتمثل في تحسين الظروف الإجتماعية والإقتصادية للمرأة.

### Why Is Helping Women Important?

In Morocco, women make up 21% of the workforce, but more than 50% of Morocco's total population. Due to the male-dominated labor market, it can be difficult for women to succeed or break into the business sphere. Many of the women in the Aboughlou Cooperative work to provide an income for their families, attain economic independence, and gain valuable skills that they can pass down to their children.

*"Since joining the Aboughlou Cooperative, I've become my own breadwinner."*

- Member, Aboughlou Cooperative.

The work that women take part in at the Aoughlou Cooperative is self-led, which means that they have the time and freedom to take part in family life. The workday begins at 12 pm and finishes around 6 pm, so women have time to take care of children in the morning and evening. Most women in the cooperative are married or widowed and have several children. Many said that their husbands were not supportive of their work with the Cooperative when it was first formed.

### ماهي الأهمية؟

بسبب هيمنة الذكور على سوق العمل تكون النساء المغربيات 21% فقط من القوة العاملة، قد يكون من الصعب على النساء النجاح أو اقتحام مجال الأعمال و التجارة. تعمل العديد من النساء في تعاونية ابوغلو لتوفير دخل لعائلاتهن واكتساب الإستقلال الإقتصادي واكتساب مهارات قيّمة يمكنهن تلقينها إلى أطفالهن. عندما سُئلت عضوة في التعاونية عما يعنيه القيام بالعمل مع شركة أبوغلو التعاونية: " أصبحت أبوغلوعائلي الخاصة منذ انضمامي."

عمل النساء في تعاونية أبوغلو هو ذاتي الطابع، وبذلك يتبقى لهم الوقت والحرية للمشاركة في الحياة الأسرية. يبدأ يوم العمل في الساعة 12 ظهراً وينتهي في حوالي الساعة 6 مساءً، بحيث يكون لدى النساء وقت لرعاية الأطفال في فترات اليوم. معظم النساء في التعاونية متزوجات أو أرامل ولديهن عدة أطفال. رددت كثيرات منهن أن في بداية المشروع أزواجهن لم يكن دعماً لعملهم مع التعاونية .

## Week 2: What Societal Challenges Exist for Women?

*"My husband has a traditional mindset and thinks that women working outside is unrighteous"*

Women are usually expected to perform domestic labor in Morocco, while the man of a family earns the income. In the case that a family is unable to secure an adequate income, women in the family may work. Most of the women in the Aoughlou Cooperative cannot read or write, which further limits their access to decent jobs. Through their work at the Cooperative, women can engage in labor that may be seen as traditionally male in a way they can achieve economic security and challenge the dominant ideological assumptions.

*"I walk 3 km every day from my home to the cooperative"*

Since women are not traditionally involved in small businesses, especially in rural areas, there is a unique set of logistical challenges faced by the Aoughlou Cooperative. For example, it is often challenging for women to get to the markets where they sell their products -- they rely on public transportation and are limited in the times that they can be away from their homes and families.

## "إن زوجي يملك عقلية تقليدية فهو يعتقد أن المرأة لا يجب أن تعمل خارج بيتها."

من المتوقع دائما أن تعمل المرأة في أشغال البيت في حين أن الرجل يعمل خارج البيت. في بعض الحالات، عدم قدرة الرجل من الحصول على عمل خارج البيت يمكن حينها لنساء العائلة العمل. لكن أغلبية نساء التعاونية ليتمكنهم الكتابة و القراءة مما يمنعهن من الحصول على عمل مربح. تستطيع النساء من خلال انخراطهم في الأعمال التي تنسب للرجال فقط حيث تمكنهم من تحقيق استقرار مادي وتحدي الإيديولوجيات و الافتراضات السائدة.

## "أمشي 3 كم كل يوم من منزلي إلى التعاونية."

نظرًا لأن المرأة لا تشارك في الأعمال التجارية الصغيرة ، وخاصة في المناطق الريفية ، فهناك مجموعة كبيرة من التحديات اللوجستية التي تواجهها . على سبيل المثال ، غالباً ما يكون من الصعب على النساء الوصول إلى الأسواق لبيع منتجاتهن لذلك يعتمدن على المواصلات العامة ويقتصر.

### Production

The Aboughlou Cooperative produces organic couscous, some baked goods, and aromatic spices and flowers.

The Aboughlou Cooperative also produces raw materials for an international cosmetics company, which are then used to produce perfumes and fragrances for cosmetic products. This includes calendula, saffron, and chamomile.

تنتج تعاونية أبوغلو الكسكس العضوي وبعض السلع المخبوزة والتوابل العطرية والزهور كما أنها.

مواد خام ل تُستخدم بعد ذلك لإنتاج والعطور لمنتجات التجميل. وهذا يشمل آذريون والزعفران والبابونج.



### **Week 3: What is Aboughlou? Salaam Fellows Offer an Eye-Witness Report**

Aboughlou is an association that was created by women and for women in Tnin Orika village. This cooperative highlights the issues of the village women who suffer from the extreme pressure that is imposed by their social surroundings.

The Salaam Fellows of the Open Hands Initiative got the opportunity to visit and speak to some of the women involved in the Aboughlou Cooperative. The women's impressive stories say a lot about leadership and women's empowerment. It requires courage and audacity to take the initiative to create an association whose major interest is to elevate the social and financial life of the females who live in this area.

However, the challenges they faced at the inception of the cooperative and still face today are numerous. It starts with their social context that creates an obstacle to their ambitious visions. These women are striving to establish their own business, hoping that their organic products could reach a greater number of people, despite critics in the community.

We came across different stories that portray the daily lives of these women as wives, mothers, sisters, and widows. You can tell from their eyes how proud they are through challenging their difficulties alongside with the social stigma that is regarded as a heavy burden on their shoulders.

The partnership between Aboughlou and High Atlas Foundation has played a key role in the creation of this cooperative. These women were given training by High Atlas Foundation to enhance their self-awareness about their purpose which most of it lies in helping their families financially and providing a good education to their kids.

***“I am a member of this cooperative. I am 60 years old. My husband died when I was 22. I got married at age 14 and I had my first son at age 15. I contributed to the creation of this business. When the High Atlas Foundation proposed the idea, I was reluctant to join the group. After thinking about it, I decided to join. Now, I feel proud of what I am doing. I did not go to school when I was a kid. The thing I regret the most is forcing my kids to drop out of school and start working at a very early age. If I had the same current mentality, I would have let them resume their education. Thanks to the High Atlas Foundation, I am now aware of several things and, I believe that age is not a problem no matter what society puts pressure on me to quit what I am doing. Now, I feel like my life has meaning.”***





## ما هي أبوغلوا

أبوغلوا هي جمعية تأسست في سنة 2016 على يد مجموعة من نساء قرية إثنين أوريكا بهدف خدمتهم. تركز الجمعية على المشاكل التي يعاني منها نساء هذه القرية خاصة الضغوطات المفروضة عليهم من محيطهم. قامت زمانة سلام بزيارة مقر الجمعية للقاء النساء اللواتي يعملن فيها. تحدثنا قصصهن المميّزة عن أدوارهن القيادية في مجال تمكين المرأة. يتطلب تأسيس هذا النوع من الجمعية مجهودا كبيرا من أجل الرفع بوضع المرأة الإجماعي و المادي لنساء القرية. لكن المشاكل التي يواجهن و لازن يواجهونها تبقى معدودة ومن بينها المجتمع ككل التي تقف حاجزا أمام أحلامهم. هؤلاء النساء يعملن جاهدا بهدف تأسيس عملهن وجعل منتوجاتهم تصل لعدد كبير من الزبناء.

لقد صادفنا قصصًا مختلفة تصور الحياة اليومية لهؤلاء النساء باعتبارهن زوجات وأمّهات وأخوات وأرامل. يمكنك أن تستنتج من أعينهم مدى فخرهم من خلال تحدي كل الصعوبات إلى جانب الوصمة الاجتماعية التي تعتبر عبئًا ثقيلًا على أكتافهم. لعبة الشراكة بين أغبالو و مؤسسة الأطلس الكبير دورًا رئيسيًا في إنشاء هذه التعاونية. تم تدريب النساء من قبل مؤسسة الأطلس الكبير لتعزيز وعيهن الذاتي حول هدفهن الشخصي الذي يكمن في مساعدة أسرهن على الصعيد المادي وتقديم تعليم جيد لأطفالهن

## قصة

أنا عضو في هذه التعاونية. عمري 60 سنة. توفي زوجي عندما كان عمري 22 عامًا. تزوجت في الرابعة عشرة من عمري أنجبت ابني الأول في سن 15 عامًا. لقد ساهمت في إنشاء هذا العمل. عندما اقترحت مؤسسة الأطلس الكبير الفكرة ، كنت أحجم عن الانضمام إلى المجموعة. بعد التفكير في الأمر ، قررت الانضمام. الآن ، أشعر بالفخر بما أقوم به. لم أذهب إلى المدرسة عندما كنت طفلاً. أشعر بالأسف لأنني أرغمت أطفالتي على ترك المدرسة والبدء في العمل في سن مبكرة للغاية. إذا كان لدي نفس العقلية الحالية ، لكنك سمحت لهم باستئناف تعليمهم. بفضل مؤسسة الأطلس الكبير ، أنا الآن على دراية بالعديد من الأشياء ، وأعتقد أن العمر ليس مشكلة بغض النظر عن ما يفرضه المجتمع علي كي أترك ما أفعله. الآن ، أشعر أن حياتي لها معنى. "

## كيف تساهم تعاونية ابوغلوا في تمكين المرأة؟

تخول الشراكة بين التعاونية و مؤسسة الأطلس الكبير تأطير النساء عبر تنظيم ورشات. تشارك النساء في ورشات لمحو الأمية يومين في الأسبوع، ويتلقون تدريباً متخصصاً في تمكين المرأة من خلال تمرين تخيل لمؤسسة الأطلس الكبير، وتتعلمن مَعًا كيفية العمل بفعالية كفريق واحد من أجل تحقيق هدفهن الأسمى المتمثل في تحسين الظروف الاجتماعية والإقتصادية للمرأة.

# 2019 Salaam Fellows



**Salma  
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U. of Fez MA  
Cultural Studies

Deutsch Rotes Kreuz Fellow working with asylum seekers and refugees.



**Vikram  
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U. Penn BA  
Intl. Relations

State Department NSLIY Awardee for study of Mandarin in Taiwan



**Hasnae  
Bakhouch**

Mohamed V U.  
BA Pol. Sci

Country director of Global Peace Chain & Founder of Young Peacebuilders Morocco

**Hannah  
Barrett**

American U. BA  
Intl. Relations



Security and Arabic studies, Founder of Women in Security Studies at AU.

**Ivana  
Bozic**

Yale BA Cognitive  
Science



Teaches debate at a women's prison and studies criminal justice reform.

**John  
Chappell**

Georgetown MA  
Intl. Relations



Student of Foreign Policy, MENA, human rights, and political transition.



**Hasna  
El Asri**

Mohamed V U. BA  
English Education

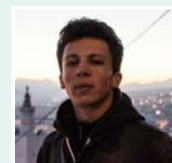
Teacher dedicated to empowering youth and minorities in her community



**Nassim  
El Khou**

Natl. School of  
Trade & Mgmt.

Marketing student, MEPI alum, activist & founder of Dajja.



**Muhammed  
El Metmari**

U. of Abdelmalek  
Essadi MA English

Visual artist, community activist & Palestinian-Israeli conflict researcher.

**Assya  
El Moudafia**

Ben Malek U. MA  
Cultural Studies



Public speaking, children's education and empowerment activist.

**Mohamed  
El Firm**

Moulay Ismail U.  
MA Comms.



Researcher of culture, religion, society, and digital media.

**Mohammed  
El Wahabbi**

Founder of Olive  
Writers Program



Award-winning writer, non-profit leader & Stanford Amends Fellow at Oxford.



**Omar  
Faris**

Al-Akhawayn BA  
Business Admin.

Co-founder of Sub-Saharan Immigrant Aid initiative.



**Connor  
Hardy**

U. Penn BA  
Health & Societies

Anti-violence activist, sexual assault counselor, and campus leader.



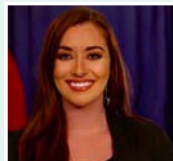
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Wright**

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Aspiring journalist & researcher of Middle East and Turkish politics.



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The Open Hands Initiative is a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to improving people-to-people understanding and international friendship through cultural and educational exchanges and other projects that focus on our shared values and common humanity.

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