

AWA'3EENA (JORDAN)

THE STORY



The idea behind Awa'3eena may be a simple one, but its effects have the potential to be diverse and far reaching. Awa'3eena (an Arabic word pronounced a-wa-EE-na, meaning "our clothes") is a concept launched by

the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD). It aims at providing good quality clothing at low cost to Jordanian women, especially targeting low-income women who can't afford quality clothing. Awa'3eena, which is has just completed the pilot phase of the project, has four different objectives: reducing household expenditures for its patrons, providing choice for women's self-expression through interaction with other women through Awe'3eena shops, promoting women-led initiatives, and developing social entrepreneurship among women. In addition to providing clothing for women at reduced prices, Awa'3eena plans to open three centers to train women in business.

By partnering with other businesses in Jordan, the Awa'3eena stores obtain good quality clothing which they can then sell to women for low prices. Not only does this provide women with a chance to save money for themselves and their families, but it also provides an opportunity for empowerment; women can feel confident about their appearance. Beyond empowering women through their appearances, Awa'3eena offers a place where it is socially and culturally acceptable for women to shop, try on, and buy clothing. Since many of the existing clothing stores in Jordan are run by men, women do not always feel comfortable to shop freely in the same way they would in a shop run completely by other women. Offering this freedom goes a long way in developing a sense of community in which women can support each other socially and professionally.

On a larger scale, Awa'3eena can begin to empower women to provide services that their communities need, in this case good quality, low cost clothing. This project opens the door for women who wish to learn how to run a business, provide for their peers, and improve their own lives. With an emphasis on environmental sustainability and ethical commerce, Awa'3eena has a great deal of potential to empower women on a number of different levels.

FACTS ABOUT WOMEN IN JORDAN

- In 2003, the estimated earned income annually for women was \$2,004. For men the estimated earned income was \$6,491.
- In 1999, 25% of all killings reported in Jordan were classified as "honor killings." It is estimated that only 7.5% of all honor killings are reported.
- In 1974, women were given the right to vote and hold office in Jordan, currently women hold 7.9% of parliament seats.
- Jordan has the highest female literacy of all the Arab states, and in 2000, women made up 90% of people enrolled in government literacy classes.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Support Spark in its efforts to raise money for Awa'3eena. A portion of the proceeds from **Spark's Black and Pink Ball** at the W Hotel on **October 13th** will fund Aw'3eena's program to provide training workshops to women to equip them with the necessary skills to run and manage a small business.

