

## TAMAZISTE TIKIRT

### One Goal: “Make the Cooperative Succeed”

What a warm welcome we received! Ten enthusiastic and determined women, all members of the **Tamaziste Tikirt** cooperative in Aït Zineb, located in the commune of the Ouarzazate province, welcomed us into the cooperative's new space.

The Tamaziste Tikirt cooperative produces couscous made from wheat or barley, as well as a variety of cakes and biscuits. The president, Jalila, explains that *‘the recipes are ancestral and of Amazigh origin, passed down by the elders of the village.’*

The cooperative was created in January 2023 by a few women who had traditional skills, available time, and a desire to be more active. They organised themselves by working together every day, first at one woman's house, then at another's, taking turns to host the team. This allowed them to work together and help each other. Later one of them made a garage available to the cooperative, which allowed them to meet for 18 months to work and cook together.



Following the earthquake of September 2023, the village was badly damaged. Some families lost their homes. More women joined the cooperative. As the garage became too small, the cooperative needed to expand. The Caritas team met with them, as they did with several other cooperatives, to listen to their needs and assess urgencies. **Seeing their dedication and joy in working together, Caritas decided to help build a larger space that would allow the cooperative to welcome more members and grow.** The technical supervisor of Caritas Maroc then proposed a plan for the new space, which was accepted.





Now they have a brand-new facility: a spacious and bright workspace where they cook — one day couscous, the next day pastries. There's also an office, a storage room for supplies and ingredients, and a changing room. The next step is to equip the facility. Caritas Maroc will provide worktables, a dough mixer, ovens, and a digital scale.

The raw materials are partly produced in the village or purchased from the local souk. Their products are sold locally throughout the commune. Once they comply with ONSSA regulations (National Office for Food Safety), they will be able to access national and international markets.



What stands out when listening to these ten women from the same douar is their determination to move forward together, and the friendship and respect that unite them. The women make all the decisions. *“There’s a big difference between the beginning of the cooperative and now,”* says Fatima. Khadija adds: *“I thank God for the existence of this cooperative. I didn’t really have a goal in my life, and now my time is organized around the cooperative. It gives me balance and a purpose: to make the cooperative succeed and help it grow internationally.”* Their schedule is well-organized and balanced; nothing is overlooked. They work at the cooperative from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and mornings are dedicated to household chores at home. *“Our husbands are proud of us,”* they tell us.



But the cooperative is also *“a place to breathe.”* Aabida adds: *“Of course, it’s a professional place, but also a friendly one, as it’s a chance to meet up with friends.”* Afatme says: *“You have brought us from darkness into light. The cooperative is my future – and also that of our children.”* The youngest, Jamila, shares: *“I’m here to learn. I live with my parents, and coming to the cooperative has allowed me to develop skills and have purpose in my days.”*

Through all this experience, these women are now expressing their needs and desire for further training. They especially wish to learn more about management, marketing, and to be able to develop a visual identity for their product. A new support program could further strengthen this already well-established dynamic.

And to close our inauguration of this new space – we danced to the sound of tambourines!

