

# WOMEN WEAVERS OF HOPE



## CELEBRATING WOMEN AT THE HEART OF CHANGE

On Wednesday, 10 December, the **Women Weavers of Hope Awards** were presented in a moving ceremony marked by powerful stories and a shared commitment to **celebrating projects that place women at the centre of transformation.**

These awards reflect **Caritas Internationalis'** commitment to empowering women's participation, amplifying their voices, and recognising the **vital role women and girls play as weavers of hope in their communities and in leadership spaces.**

Of the 121 applications received, 50% came from African countries. These projects addressed the needs of the most vulnerable women. Although many initiatives emerge in contexts shaped by conflict, violence, inequality or natural disasters, the jury highlighted the overwhelming quality of the proposals submitted: innovative, practical and deeply inspiring projects that offer real solutions and renew hope.

## FROM HEALING TO EMPOWERMENT: SUPPORTING WOMEN IN LAÂYOUINE

One of the awarded initiatives was **"Espace Femme – From Healing to Empowerment"**, led by Caritas of the Apostolic Prefecture in Laâyoune.





The activity, led by Sister **Vanilda Pereira, EIN**, focuses on mental health, psychosocial well-being and community-building, while equipping women with practical skills and knowledge to develop a trade. As she herself expressed: *“As Christians, we must help one another, but very often we do not have sufficient resources.”* Thanks to this award, the project will be able to purchase materials and manage the logistics needed to expand the sewing group, transforming it into an income-generating activity that **empowers women towards economic independence and sustainable livelihoods.**



## HOPE THROUGH THE DESERT: SOLIDARITY IN THE MONA REGION

Another awarded project from the **MONA** region is led by **Fondazione Comboniane Nel Mondo Onlus** in the West Bank. The initiative supports Bedouin women through training in income-generating activities, entrepreneurial skills and the preservation of cultural heritage, reaching 100 women in ten villages. Sister **Cecilia Sierra** summed up the spirit of the project by stating: *“To encounter the poor and the forgotten is to encounter God. Even solidarity can bloom in the desert.”*





## HANDCRAFTED GIFTS FROM THE ZARBIAT ACHBAROU COOPERATIVE

Maje Martin, from Caritas Morocco, representative of the MONA region in the *CI Women Working Group* and a member of the jury, presented one of the symbolic gifts given to the awarded projects: a handmade carpet, carefully woven by the women of the **Zarbiat Achbarou Cooperative** (Morocco).

**When**, in September 2023, **an earthquake destroyed their village and their workspace, these women continued weaving** for an entire year in a tent, enduring harsh weather conditions. With the support of Caritas Morocco and other NGOs, they eventually managed to rebuild their own workspace. **These carpets are more than woollen threads: they are symbols of resilience, renewal and hope.**



Throughout the exchanges with the panellists and the many enriching contributions, it became clear that one of the shared challenges is **restoring women's dignity and making their work and leadership visible.**

In his closing words, **Alistair Dutton**, Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis, reminded everyone that *“at the heart of all these projects are real people doing the hard work. And that is where we find hope.”*

