

THE HEART OF MALI



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ITC | Ethical Fashion Initiative

THE SPECIAL TUAREG JEWELRY PROJECT

The first prototype production workshop, part of the "Special Tuareg Jewelry Project" of the Ethical Fashion project in Mali, took place from 11 to 16 June 2018. This project was done in partnership with the fashion accessories house SeeMe, and in close collaboration with the Ministry of Crafts, Mali.

The project "Creating fair jobs and developing specific values related to fashion, lifestyle and interior design sectors in Burkina Faso and Mali" has demonstrated the relevance of this



"special" project in the development of specific values related to a craft sector that draws inspiration from the cultural expressions and lifestyles of local communities. Funded by the European Union through the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, this project is part of the Ethical Fashion Initiative (EFI) implemented by the International Trade Center (ITC), which aims to contribute to poverty reduction by enabling marginalized artisans in developing countries to fit into the international luxury fashion market.

This project was created to honor the innovation of ancestral rich craftsmanship for an ethical market and is aimed at strengthening artisanal talent and develop more marketable jewelry.



The First Prototype Production Workshop

The first prototype production workshop was held at the Alhassane Ag Agaly jewelry workshop in Bamako, as part of the "Special Tuareg Jewelry Project" of the EFI project in Mali. In partnership with the fashion accessories house SeeMe, and in close collaboration with the Ministry of Crafts of Mali, this practical training aimed at strengthening the talents of master Tuareg craftsmen, through the production of more modern jewel prototypes, which are more attractive to fashion trends, yet inspired by the rich ancestral craftsmanship. This creates additional opportunities for sales, income and improved prospects for an important sector of the Malian economy.

The origins of the project

During her first mission in Mali in the summer of 2017, the designer and founder of SeeMe, Caterina Occhio, identified four main weaknesses in the jewelry artisanal production in Mali. First of all, it is interesting to stress that the market is mainly interested in silver jewelry, despite Mali being the third producer of gold world-wide. Gold is in fact too expensive, and although jewelry symbolizes status and represents a safe investment, the majority of the population can only afford silver jewelry. Occhio identified four main limiting factors in the sector, these being:



- 1- Poor working conditions, with severe consequences on the health of the workers
- 2- Product Design: so far there is only variation on ancient themes, no exploration of market demands
- 3- Access to Market: only traditional retail and no knowledge on how to expand
- 4- Low efficiency in the production: use of traditional techniques

The project launched in June 2018 was aimed at tackling these four points.

The first jewelry workshop under the coordination of the Master Jeweler, Mr. Alhassane Ag Agaly and his 11 teammates with profiles of master craftsmen and junior craftsmen and the technical supervision of the stylist Ms. Caterina Occhio and the designer of the prototypes Ms. Giorgia Robatto, produced in record time 53 high-tech articles.

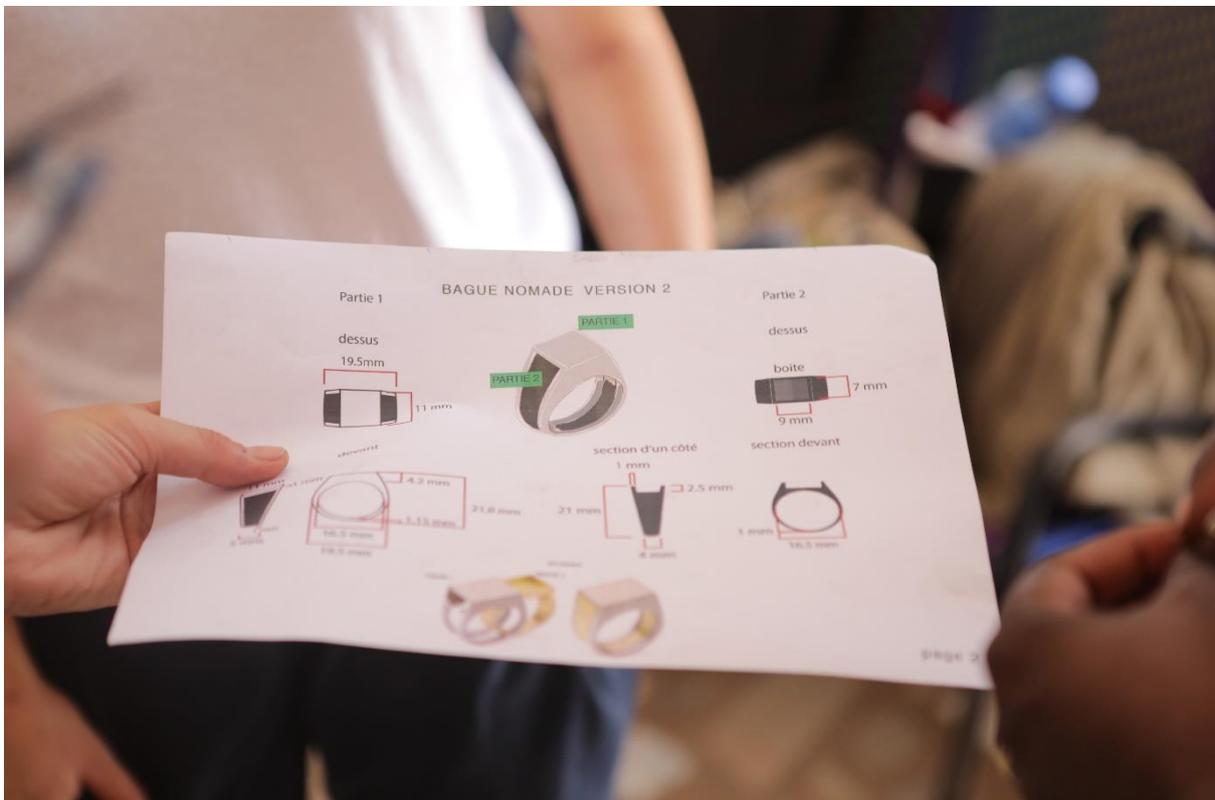
The collection







Technical drawing inspired by traditional jewelry



Solve issues with rudimental instruments



A positive learning environment with mutual respect and esteem for each other
'A collective work is what I really wish for, it gives a lot.' Stated by one of the artisans.





'The common sharing allows us to deliver identical products and to learn about each other's potential and to learn from the other artisans.' stated by one of the artisans.



'The richness is to be found here in Mali, but one has to learn how to cultivate it.'









Street address
International Trade Centre
54-56 Rue de Montbrillant
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

P: +41 22 730 0111
F: +41 22 733 4439
E: itcereg@intracen.org
www.intracen.org

Postal address
International Trade Centre
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

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