



EMWOSE
Women from ethnic minorities in social enterprise

Interview form

Overview

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<https://www.guldusi.com/en/stick-projects.html>



I am Pascale Goldenberg, I am actually French. Yet I've lived in Germany longer than in France, and I turned 60 last month. I am a mother of four children.

After the attack in New York, I had met Afghans and learned to appreciate them. For more than two years I had participated in actions with Afghans - and then these Afghans had founded an association themselves, which is now called "German-Afghan Initiative". And I had this idea to offer these women there to take up hand embroidery again. I didn't know that, because I didn't know whether they embroidered at all, whether they had ever embroidered or not, and I had the hope that they could, because hand embroidery is actually part of the tradition in Afghanistan. And that's exactly how it was indeed. Then I had written down a concept and I approached this newly founded association, the board and I presented my thing and they thought it was good, couldn't really imagine what it would be, but it was about employing women, or rather giving them the opportunity to earn money, then they agreed for the time being.

And especially the first two years were about learning hand embroidery again, because they had stopped hand embroidery. In fact, during the last years of the war, they were on the run, so to speak, and embroidery itself was not a priority, of course not.

Interview transcript

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And when they came back to their village, it was a matter of rebuilding everything and they then said, they literally told me, hand embroidery is old-fashioned, they want to embroider with machines, they want to be modern, which was not interesting for me, I was interested in hand embroidery and I was able to convince them by paying them from the beginning, also in the time when they got back into it. They had six months to learn how to do it again. I was able to find two women who could still do hand embroidery and we had rented a house where they would come, let's say, from ten to three o'clock to get back into it. And after six months that was completed and whoever wanted to, and they all wanted to, could continue to embroider at home, so in their own yard.

So in Freiburg we have a board of directors, but I think there are seven or eight of us and then because this embroidery program is a huge story, there's an accountant who I think is employed for ten or twelve hours a week and then a tax accountant. It's so complicated, the turnover is so big, we couldn't cope as an association and as non-qualified financial people, so in terms of finances, we couldn't cope. And in Afghanistan we have one staff, or rather two staff, one in Kabul and one in Herat, because we have projects in Kabul, around Kabul and around Herat. And the embroiderers are 200 women, so for ages they are very numerous.

Full video [here](#)

