



Zina OULED SI ALI - 'ARJOUAN'

Sidi Bouzid

In 2015, Zina launched her small business, 'Arjouan', a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) engraving and cutting workshop that offers customized decoration articles and tailor-made furniture to its customers.

Based in the city center of Sidi Bouzid, Zina produces numerous items for local people and wholesalers and wishes to develop her market outside the governorate, in particular the surrounding regions and large conurbations on the coast such as Sousse, Sfax and also in the capital of the country, Tunis.

The idea of launching her business in her home town began in 2012 after completing numerous graphic design, communications and promotional jobs, including publications and brochures, using desktop publishing software. Her technical skills in digital design made her realize that she could also master the Numerical Control Tool Machines, which can cut soft materials such as wood and engrave on glass and marble.

Zina decided to establish her workshop in Sidi Bouzid and specialize in wood, but realized she lacked managerial experience. In March 2014, she took part in the HP LIFE e-Learning face-to-face training, organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as

part of the 'Mashrou3i' project, which is supported by USAID, the Italian Development Cooperation and the HP Foundation. The entrepreneurial training provided her with the business and IT tools to develop a solid business plan, better define her offering, target her clientele, set prices, control costs, and manage personnel. She also participated in UNIDO's Business Coaching training in June 2015 to hone her skills and successfully launch her business.

Today Zina works in her studio with the support of a large CNC machine, two full-time employees and one seasonal employee. She also regularly attends craft fairs, such as those in Kram and Sousse, where she exhibits her products and builds her network of customers.

Zina wants to develop her market at the national level through new approaches and is considering purchasing an additional machine to specialize more in olive wood, a niche that could open up more markets.

Zina has a serene smile. "Starting your business is not easy, it is very stressful, you have to go as you say in Tunisian "khatwa khatwa", "step by step". To succeed, you have to be risk-averse and have a lot of patience while remaining optimistic, no matter what."