

ROOTED HANDS

Rebuilding a living tradition by creating
a future for the women who carry it.

A long-term social initiative from Musakucha
village, Masalli district.





A disappearing women-led craft became a working social system.

Rooted Hands does not archive hasir as folklore. It builds the conditions for women to keep practicing it: visibility, safer work, skills, market access and public recognition.

13

women artisans
currently working

100s

products sold and orders
received

130K+

organic views for the project
story

Gold

Baku Flames
recognition



CONTEXT

Hasir is not only a craft. It is knowledge passed through hands.

In southern Azerbaijan, reeds have long been collected, dried and woven into everyday objects by women. The technique carries family memory, regional identity and practical knowledge passed from one generation to another.

The material was local.
The knowledge was ancestral.
The opportunity was missing.

PROBLEM

The craft had survived. The women behind it had not been seen.

The makers of hasir worked with little protection, little recognition and almost no access to audiences beyond the village.

As everyday demand faded, the craft lost not only visibility, but also its economic value for women.





TASK

Not to save an object. To make the people behind it visible.

The task was to protect a disappearing practice without taking it away from the community that carried it.

Rooted Hands had to turn inherited knowledge into a pathway: visible, respected and economically useful for women in Musakucha.

What had to change: visibility, working conditions, practical skills, market access, cultural recognition and income pathways.



INSIGHT

A craft stays alive only when the people carrying it can build a life around it.

Documentation alone would not be enough. For the women, continuity had to become work, dignity, recognition and a reason to keep going.

That became the strategic core of Rooted Hands.

THE IDEA

Preserve the craft by creating opportunity.

Rooted Hands was developed as a long-term social initiative where cultural preservation, women's participation and regional development support one another.

01

PROTECT

Respect the inherited craft, materials and knowledge.

02

EQUIP

Support women with skills, tools and safer conditions.

03

BUILD

Create a brand, product line, digital presence and shared studio.

04

CONNECT

Link local craft to tourism, media, fashion and wider audiences.

INTERVENTION

The project built a system around the women — not around a campaign moment.

Rooted Hands gave structure to knowledge that had remained inside villages: visibility, institutional support and practical capability.

The work included healthcare attention, safer conditions, mentoring, digital and business skills, product development and a permanent shared studio.





PARTICIPATION

Women were not shown as beneficiaries. They became the centre of the system.

The makers are presented as authors of cultural knowledge, producers of value and active participants in the future of the craft.

13

women artisans currently working within Rooted Hands

A collective, not a campaign poster.



VALUE & MARKET ACCESS

From inherited craft to real opportunity, recognition and continuity

The first proof of impact was practical: 13 women gained a channel to work through their craft, with hundreds of products sold and orders received. Their pieces now move beyond the village into official tourism locations across Baku, connecting local craftsmanship with people experiencing Azerbaijan today.

The question changed from “How do we protect the craft?” to “How do we keep demand, income and recognition moving?”

A permanent space turned visibility into continuity.

Rooted Hands moved beyond awareness by supporting a shared studio — a place for work, training, masterclasses, display and sales.

The studio gives the craft a practical home. Women can gather, produce, learn and present their work in one place, so the initiative can continue after the campaign.

Work / Training / Masterclasses / Display / Sales





FROM MASALLI TO MILAN

In 2025, Rooted Hands presented its sustainable fashion work at Milan Fashion Week — moving a village craft into a contemporary global cultural conversation without cutting it from its roots.

The story moved beyond the village.

Awareness became public recognition. Public recognition created more space for the women, the region and the craft to continue.

130K+

organic views reached by the project story

Gold

Baku Flames recognition for social value and equality

Milan

international cultural exposure through sustainable fashion

Metro

public-space collaboration taking the women's stories into everyday life





IMPACT

**We did not simply preserve
a disappearing craft.**

**We helped make it worth
continuing.**

For women, it became work.
For the region, it became value.
For the craft, it became a future.

13 women / hundreds of products sold / 130K+ organic views