



# Every stitch tells a story

*Roberta Ventura*

*SEP Jordan (Jerash Gaza Camp, Jordan)*



**S E P**  
J O R D A N



**65.3 million**  
forcibly displaced people worldwide

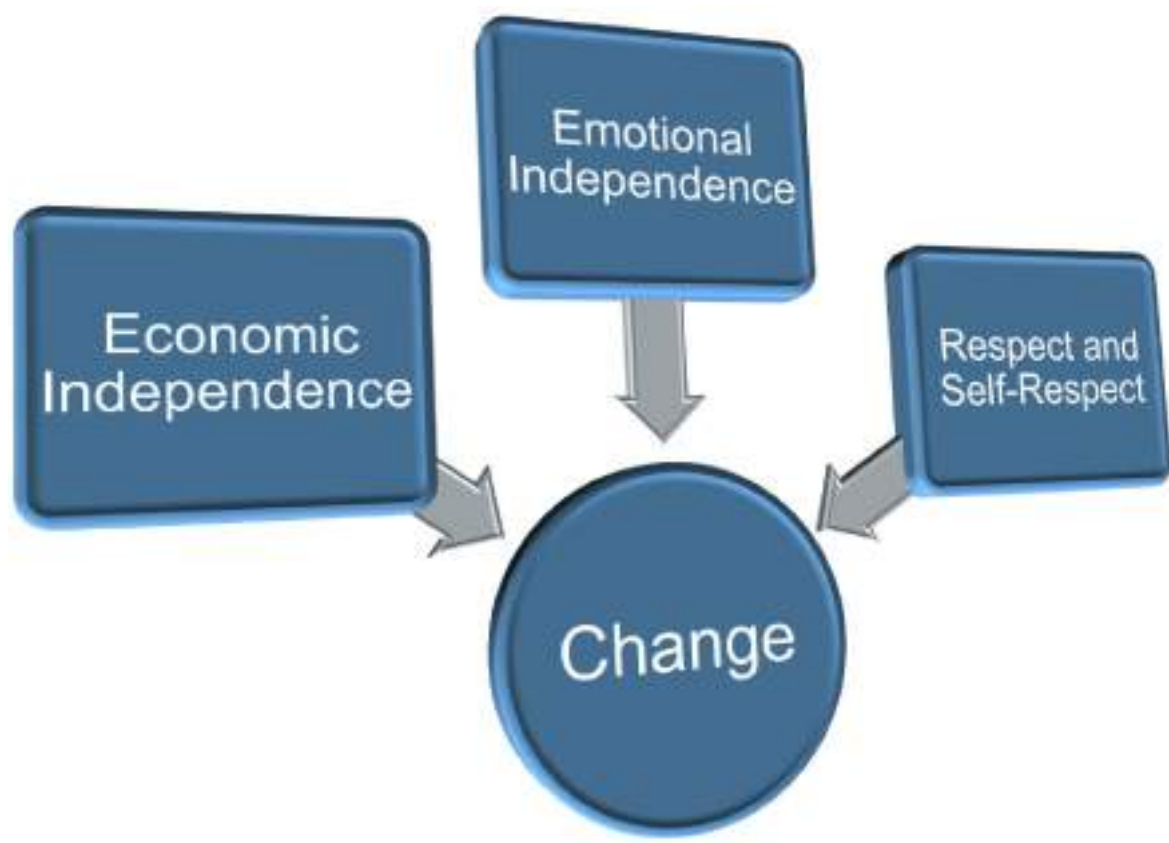


Refugees  
**21.3 million**  
16.1 million under UNHCR mandate  
5.2 million Palestinian refugees registered by UNRWA



Stateless people  
**10 million**

Source: UNHCR



J O R D A N

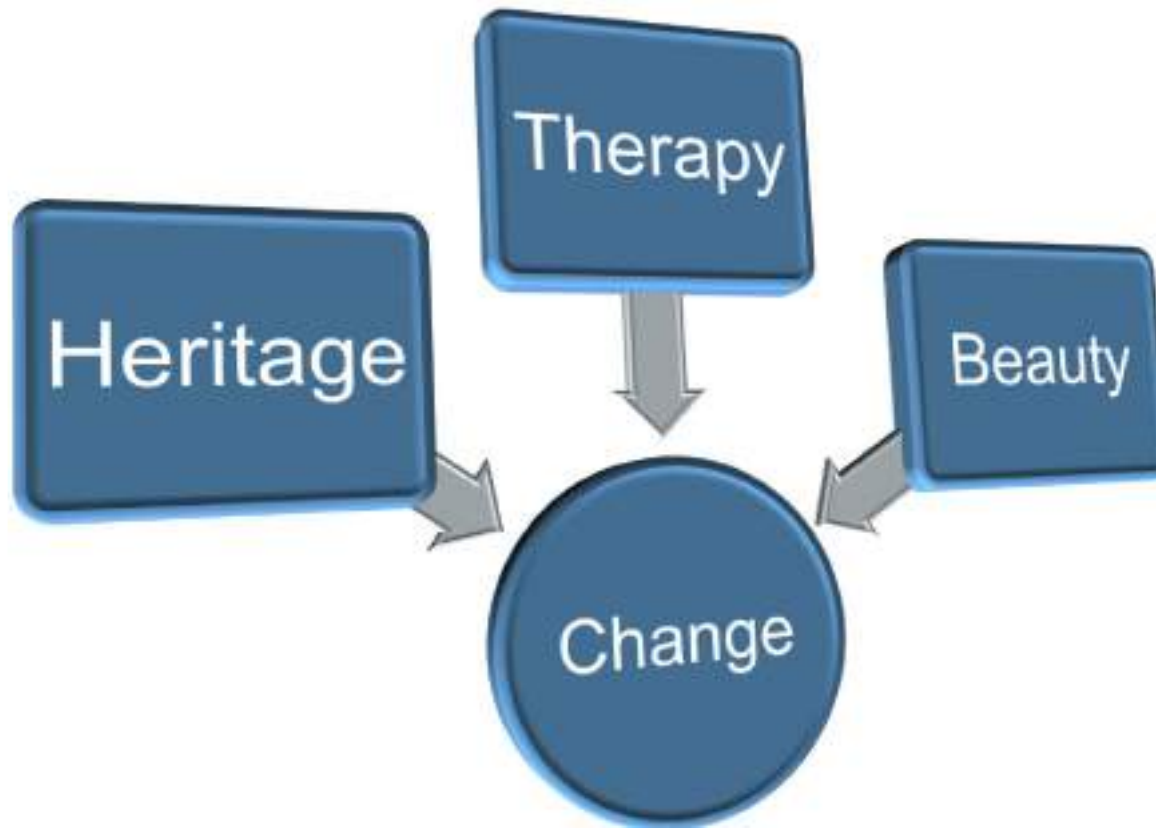


Jerash Camp, Jordan – Est. 1968



Jerash Camp, Jordan – Est. 1968

SEP: the first private company established in Jerash Camp in 50 years





HERITAGE



BEAUTY





BEAUTY



THERAPY







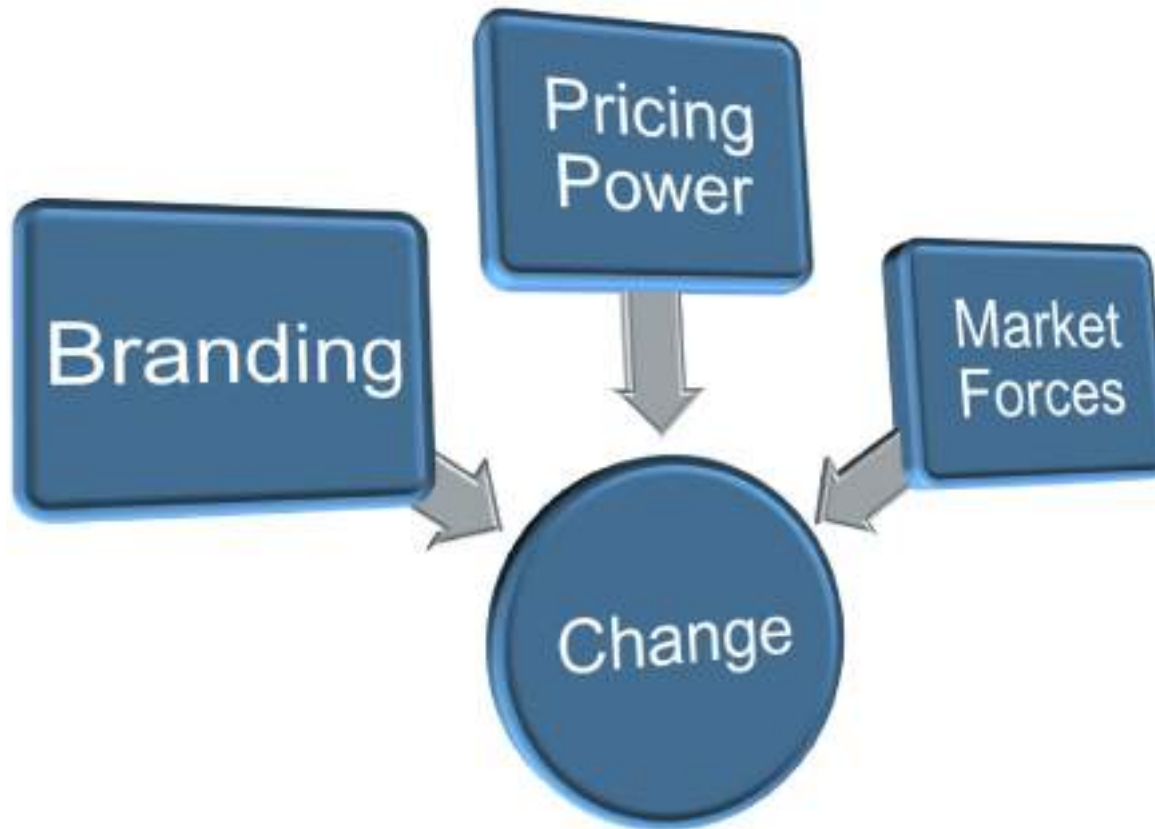
CHANGE



# Why a private company?

**S E P**

J O R D A N





MALDIVES





HAMPTONS



BIANCA BALTI



# VOGUE

DEUTSCH

*Ab an Strand und Pool! Die schönsten Accessoires für den Urlaub*



# Camouflage that will get you noticed

**There's only one label that could convince me to wear khaki, says Anna Murphy**



**F**or a colour-lover such as me the news that khaki is having a moment has not been entirely welcome. I am coming round to the idea, but I can't shake off the feeling that a material designed as camouflage still functions as such. Forgive me: I never want to blend in.

There's no danger of that in this hand-embroidered Hana shirt, pictured below, from SEP Jordan (£181, four-week delivery time, sepjordan.com). Designed by the Amman-based designer Rasha Odeh, it's lovely enough to do all the talking, but, should you be up for reading between the lines, there are other reasons to buy it.

SEP Jordan's pieces are produced by Palestinian women in the Jerash refugee camp in Jordan, otherwise known as the Gaza camp. SEP stands for "social enterprise project", but the brand's Italian founder, Roberta Ventura, is keen to point out that this is a business, not a charity. "That is what the women told us they wanted," the former investment banker says. "When we first met them we were greeted with a lot of scepticism. They had done work for NGOs producing so-called heritage products, and the pieces never sold so they never got paid. I wanted them to produce things that women like me would buy and wear. They soon discovered we were different. That the things we made would sell and that we would pay them quickly."

Palestinian girls are taught to embroider by their mothers and grandmothers, and the traditional heavily ornamented dresses are worn on high days and holidays. "We are preserving their heritage, but we don't label it in that way," Ventura says. "One of them told me, 'We don't know who we are or where we are going, but we can forget our problems and just concentrate on creating something beautiful!'"

The women receive 18 per cent of the price of a garment they have made, and SEP Jordan invests a portion of the profits into improving life in the camp, offering, among other things, classes in English and coding, and providing education and support for women dealing with domestic violence.

Also both khaki and covetable are SEP

Jordan's extravagantly bloom-strewn Tulip shirt, which launches today, and the Flame jacket, a hooded parka with semi-abstract embroidered edging (£160 and £225 respectively, with a one-month delivery time).

## The LBD — it's the new LBD

To the Royal Academy for last week's Summer Exhibition party, always one of the seasons hottest — and highest dress-code pressure — tickets. What conclusions were to be drawn about how the great and the good, the female portion at least, dress to impress these days? On the one hand that anything goes, as long as it's not black. The LBD was nowhere to be seen, having been superseded by the LFD (in which L stands for little or long and F stands for floral) and the — hang on a minute — LBD, in which B stands not for black but bright, as in yellow, red, your hot hue of choice.

What else? It's very much a case of arms maketh the woman these days. Sleeveless and short-sleeved dresses — always dresses — were the name of the game. The biggest wardrobe fail was to not hand your jacket in at the coat check and make manifest your gloriously toned triceps. Full disclosure: that was me. But only because I couldn't get enough

of my Topshop black crop jacket with frill detail (£45, topshop.com).

It was not — for once — because my upper-arm musculature wasn't up to snuff.

Thanks to the new book

by the fitness trainer-cum-yoga teacher Shona Vertue

— she finesses the downward dogs of some biokinetic David Beckham — I can give

good upper arm with the best of them (*The Vertue Method: A Stronger, Fitter, Healthier You* — in 28 Days, £15.99, Yellow Kite).

Vertue's beyond-pert buttocks are a thing of wonder, but thankfully it isn't yet a prerequisite to showcase similar at parties — or not at the ones I go to.

## You don't want to be in Theresa's shoes

My eschewal of jacket removal was not the most egregious sartorial #mybad this week. That came at a friend's birthday on Saturday, for which I decided unthinkingly to wear my favourite leopard-print flats. The horror on the part of my fellow guests came from all sides of the political spectrum.



"You are wearing Theresa May shoes," exclaimed mortified Tories and Tories alike. In contrast, another guest's red numbers, pictured, were a triumph: chic and £29.50 to boot, or rather, to mid-heel (marksandspencer.com). May would love them, which means the rest of us would never be able to wear them again. Let's hope she's not reading this column. It's not as if she hasn't got anything else to do. Instagram: @annagmurphy



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### LOCAL HEROES

Architect-turned-builder Sarah Evans combines her skill sets in a range of art furnishings and art prints inspired by the world's finest post-war structures. Many depict housing developments in areas ranging from Westminster to Hackney and make homage to some of London's urban gems. **Span CG print, £85 (sarahfrancis.co.uk)**



Living LOVES

### [Hit list]

Designistas take note. Heal's is showcasing 100 of its most celebrated products in an exhibition at the Tottenham Court Road store, including classics such as this Pinna four-poster. **(heals.com)**



### DEVOL-UTION

Kitchen remodeler @VCL has opened its second London showroom in Chelsea and it's a 3,000-sq-ft space in a grand Georgian townhouse. The fit-out is a nod to the original Georgian architecture, but with a modern twist. **(vclinteriors.com)**

### PARK LIFE

Summer at the city shouldn't be the same without a visit to check out the Singapore Pavilion (and make the most of the view). This year, the design pavilion handed over to Debbie Gonzalez of Studio Gonzalez Architects. Its core aim is to build round the edges of a spreading park - just the place to shelter from the rain or the sun. **(Kensington Gardens, 302 (seppeningstone.org))**



### STITCH IN TIME

The top Jordan textile and accessories range takes all kinds of bases. Crafted with traditional cross-stitch by women in refugee camps in Jordan, each piece tells a unique story. **(heals.com)** Clutch cover, £70; and clutch bag, £81. **(seppeningstone.org)** Available from the Arca concept store, 51 (arcanestore.co.uk)



Condé Nast  
**Traveller**  
MIDDLE EAST

**Eid gift or Middle East travel memento, these souvenirs change lives**

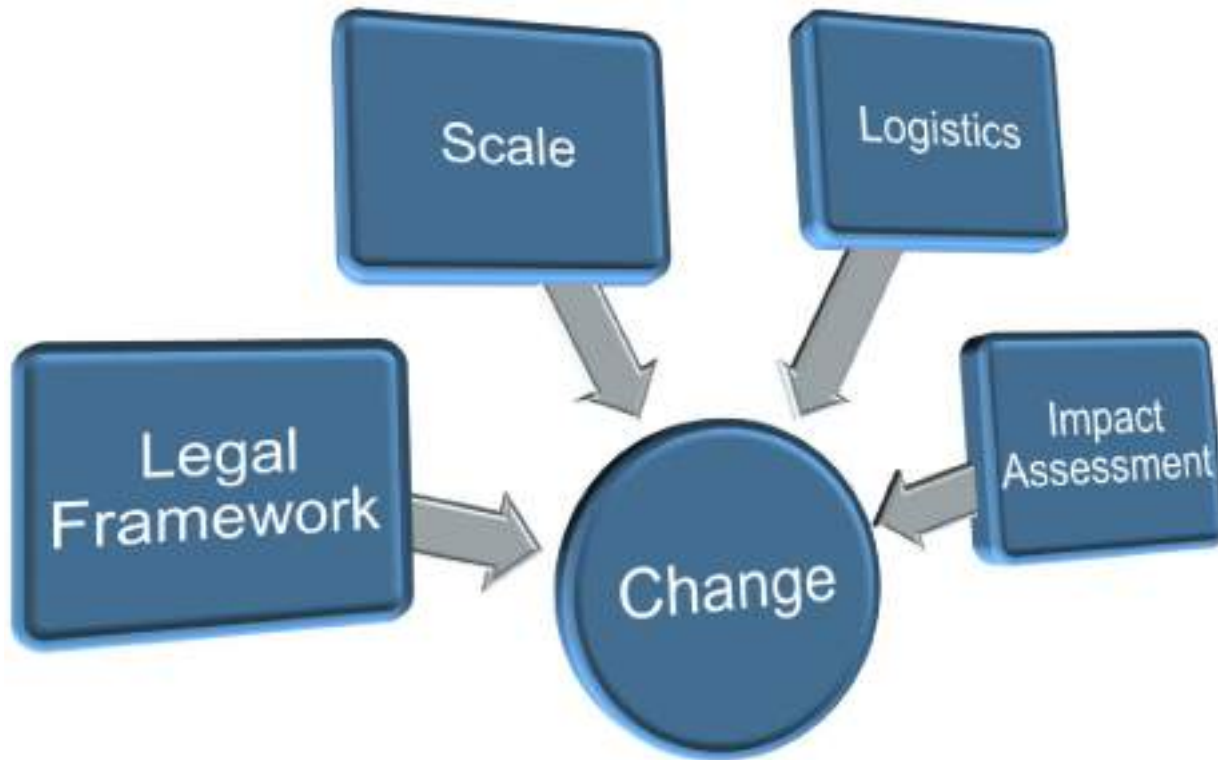


**Sep Jordan embroidery products empower destitute women in rural areas**

The root belief behind SEP Jordan is that "There is no way a lady should spend months to embroider the most stunning patterns, and still live as a destitute: it is intrinsically wrong". This is the philosophy of its founders, and SEP Jordan is the link between these creative women and the world. The brand harnesses these lady's centuries-old embroidery techniques and gives them a modern twist. The resulting products are then sold online.



# Challenges





# A new paradigm: shopping with a direct social impact



Every Stitch Tells a Story



J O R D A N

# SEP Jordan Priorities in Year 4 of Operations

<b>1</b>	Drive revenue growth and increase number of artists from 400 to 1,000+
<b>2</b>	Engage in collaborations on product development, logistics, distribution
<b>3</b>	Reach profitability and continue social impact investment in the community



# SEP Jordan Social Enterprise Sector WISH LIST

<b>1</b>	International Legal and regulatory framework for Social Enterprises: impact assessment, guidelines, fiscal regime, access to markets, etc.
<b>2</b>	Institutionalization of relationship between SocEnt and Private Sector CSR and Strategy departments, Foundations, ngo's, Int'l agencies.
<b>3</b>	International standards for labour, financial, supply chain, etc. policies



Have a great trip!



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