

Gavin Rajah's Prêt à Vivre collection supports local talent

Gavin Rajah's [Prêt à Vivre collection](#) of linen and handpoured massage candles, set to hit @home stores later this month, is the driving force behind the 'Behind the Seams' initiative, a project that outsources and trains women from vulnerable communities to sew and embroider.



“Many of these women head up their households and are the sole breadwinners for their family,” explains Rajah.

“Becoming involved in the project enables them to provide for their children while developing their own innate potential and learning additional business skills as well.”

The women are individually trained and mentored, working mainly from home, which is an added advantage. “Adapting their traditional skills to the requirements of the soft furnishings range has broadened their artistic vistas and helped them develop new dimensions in their approach to the work,” Rajah continues.

“This obviously has a spin-off on other items which they produce for clients of their own.”

Shamiegah Abrahams, one of the women who has been involved in the initiative since its inception, said that it had had a significant impact on her life. “It’s not just the work and the pay, but also the training and the encouragement,” she comments.

To date 14 women have been employed full-time and the initiative is also giving rise to supplementary jobs, such as hand-pouring the candles, and producing the boxes for the candles. Rajah is confident that as future collections are brought to

market, extending the soft furnishings range and developing new home fragrances, many more jobs will be created.

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