



# WIDOWS OF BATHORE

## ALBANIA

In northern Albania, blood feuds have left hundreds of women and children without husbands and fathers. Young girls rarely leave their villages, fearing the marauding gangs known to kidnap and sell children into the sex trade. And for those widows who have fled the conflict and traveled south, they often meet more hardship. Hundreds of widows congregate in one of the poorest parts of Albania's capital, yet without husbands they remain virtually invisible to society. And without literacy or marketable skills, they remain without work. Our partners have seen their silent suffering and begun to empower them to rise above poverty. At the center for Widows of Bathore, our partners faithfully provide vocational training, employment, and a market for the widows' work. As our partners expand the program by purchasing sewing machines and planning literacy courses, they dream of self-sustainability for these women. When you purchase their beautiful handmade pieces, not only do you invest in these dreams, you acknowledge those deemed "invisible" and invest value in these precious widows.



## STORIES OF RESCUE & EMPOWERMENT

COUNTRY: ALBANIA • PROGRAM: MICRO-ENTERPRISE



### Migena

Migena's husband and brother were murdered for their money—a total of ten dollars discovered between them. Late that afternoon, a van pulled up to Migena's house, and she identified the bodies. Years later, Migena still cannot describe the pain she felt that day. But with two small children and an ailing mother in law, she had no time to mourn the loss. She searched desperately for work but could find nothing. She began knitting and selling what she could to simply feed her family. Though Migena is proud that her children are now healthy and strong, her own health has suffered from those years of hard work. At the center for Widows of Bathore, she makes and sells handwork to purchase medical treatment for her and her mother in law. According to Migena, when she began, she was simply thankful for the income. But here she soon discovered a new community and a new faith that inspires and sustains her. Now, though Migena's children are grown and gone, she loves her "sisters" at the center. She says, "They are now my family."

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