



Pictured: Priya Shau and Vidya Ambore from Creative Handicrafts, India

QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2017

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Fair Trade Fashion vs. Fast Fashion

Americans buy twice as many items of clothing today as we did twenty years ago (1). Every few weeks, we can find trendy new clothing with low prices that make it easy to toss an item in our cart, wear it a few times, and give it away soon after. If we pause and think further about the history of the item—who created it, how much they were paid, what their working conditions were like—we will find the process to be obscure and unsustainable.

Most of the apparel sold in American stores is made in developing countries with low minimum wage requirements and worker regulations. Millions of women in garment factories work long hours for very little pay. With the industry's need for rapid production, they are expected to work at an unrealistic pace, frequently in unhealthy and unsafe conditions, as we witnessed with the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh in 2013 where 1,134 workers died.

We have the ability to change the system with our purchasing power. We can resist the enticement of these low-cost pieces and instead invest in high-quality apparel that was made under fair trade conditions, by artisans who are greatly improving their families' livelihoods.

Serrv partners who create our apparel items in India, Peru, and Nepal are committed to improving the quality of life for their artisans and wider communities. Creative Handicrafts and MarketPlace: Handwork of India are Serrv partners who employ low-income women in Mumbai to sew beautiful tunics and dresses. Most of the women are under-educated and have few other opportunities to earn a living and support their families. In addition to earning a fair trade wage for their work,

they are also involved in running their sewing groups and cooperatives as well as making decisions. This has led to their becoming active leaders in their communities—they have learned to speak up and advocate for women on taboo issues such as domestic violence. The self-sufficiency and self-confident voices the women develop have changed their status in their families and beyond.

"I was married at the age of 13 and only studied until 8th grade. When I was asked to be part of the embroidery design workshop I was so excited! I was then asked to coordinate the workshop and that made me feel very proud because it is a big responsibility," says Meeta Gupta, seamstress with MarketPlace: Handwork of India.

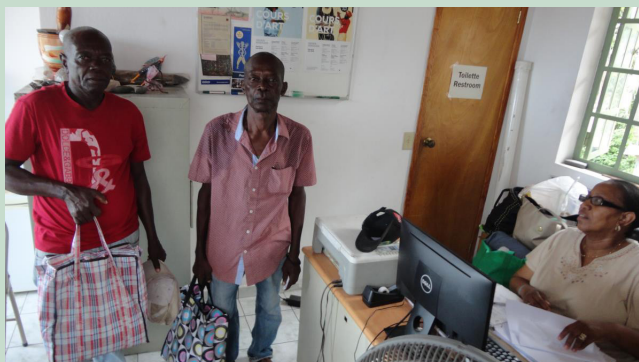
With our fair trade apparel purchases, we increase the number of positive opportunities for women like Meeta. We express our preference for high-quality and unique pieces made in safe and healthy conditions for a fair wage. Our choices matter and have a direct impact on people's lives. Find our new Spring collection of apparel at serrv.org/newapparel.

(1) *"Plentitude: The New Economics of True Wealth"* by Juliet B. Schor



Meeta Gupta from MarketPlace: Handwork of India

Please donate today



Artisans with CAH in Haiti receive vital supplies and emergency funds from Serrv after Hurricane Matthew

Your tax-deductible* donation supports struggling families in their journey to a better life.

Eradicating poverty is about education, training, and empowerment for future generations.

Donate online at serrv.org/donate or call 1.800.423.0071.

**Serrv is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Visit serrv.org/donate for financial and regulation information.*

2017: A Look Ahead

We are excited to connect with you to make 2017 our best year yet! Our work is important, relevant, and impactful, and our 68 years of experience informs our dedication and focus. Our plans for 2017 include:

- **Travel to meet with artisan partners** in India, Nepal, Swaziland, South Africa, Indonesia, and Haiti. Through these visits we will deepen our relationships, develop new products, and increase our impact. We will share updates with you throughout the year.
- **Participate in the Fair Trade Federation Annual Conference** in Louisville, Kentucky and the **World Fair Trade Organization Biennial Conference** in Delhi, India. We feel it is important to take an active leadership role in the national and global fair trade movements.
- **Introduce stunning new fair trade handcrafts** that feature traditional skills and artistry.
- **Emphasize our commitment to our Core Values**, including equality and dignity for all people, honesty and integrity in all of our interactions, and sustainable development.
- **Support our artisan partners** with their development needs through grants and training.

We are grateful to have you with us for this meaningful work!

Nepal's Children



School children in the food program

Following the devastating earthquakes in Nepal in spring 2015, Serrv has continued to respond to the needs of artisans and their families.

One Nepalese partner we work closely with is Get Paper Cooperative. Get Paper's artisans make beautiful paper products including our jewelry boxes and scarf envelopes.

We originally sent funds to help rebuild and furnish a rural school north of Kathmandu that was ruined by the earthquakes. The new school is earthquake-resistant, and more than 200 children now attend class in four new classrooms.

Our more recent donations were used to expand a food program in an urban school, after it was determined that young students desperately needed more nutrition. Get Paper built a new hall and purchased tables, cooking utensils and other supplies with our funds. Now 80 children are able to both attend school and receive nutritious food.

Get Paper Cooperative consistently focuses on the education of girls as a means to prevent human trafficking and to improve economic security. They often provide families with a small stipend if they allow their daughter(s) to attend school. They are proud of the fact that most of the students in both of these

Building Peace in a Divided Land

Serrv is a part of creating peace in Israel by offering a marketing opportunity for an inspiring organization with a mission to build peace: Sindyanna of Galilee. We have worked together since 2003.

Hadas Lahav, the founder and director of Sindyanna of Galilee, recently shared the story with us, "I was born in 1953 in a Kibbutz near the Sea of Galilee in the north of Israel. The education in the Kibbutz was Zionist but it had left-wing orientation. This contradiction intrigued me especially when later in my youth I was encountered with the Palestinian tragedy and realized that this Kibbutz was built on the ruins of an Arab village. All the inhabitants of this village fled during the war of 1948 and became refugees.

"The solidarity I share with the Palestinian cause and with those Palestinians who remained in Israel was the basis for forming Sindyanna of Galilee. In this organization, which was founded in 1996, a group of Jewish and Arab activists including myself decided to build positive social and economic answers to discrimination within Israeli society and the region. We wanted to set an example of true solidarity and cooperation. That is how Sindyanna of Galilee was formed.

"We strongly believe that we shall not be able to live in a normal place if Israeli-Jewish people do not find ways to collaborate with their Arab neighbors. From the other hand, I don't think Arabs can live in Israel without collaborating with the Jewish community either. For the average Israeli, the Palestinian and the Arab citizens are "the enemy". It takes some sophistication to see the wider picture. By our work we are trying to show people the wider picture.

"By modernizing olive farming in the Arab communities and producing a top-quality oil, we seek to stimulate the local economy and from our revenues help local Arab women, who have few employment opportunities.

"We are working within a traditional society with a short tradition of women



Hadas Lahav, founder of Sindyanna of Galilee

employees as trained professional staff; we are working inside Israel for a Jewish-Arab collaboration—opposing the official policy and image of Israel. Those are the unique challenges that Sindyanna of Galilee faces as a fair trade organization working with the Arab minority inside Israel."

Sindyanna's olive oil is award-winning, organic and delicious. You can support their peace building efforts by purchasing their oil and soaps.



Olive Oil from Sindyanna

"It is important to note that in Israel, Fair Trade is not just a social and economic choice—it is a political one."

—Hadas Lahav, founder of Sindyanna of Galilee



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OUR MISSION

to eradicate poverty wherever it resides
by providing opportunity and support
to artisans and farmers worldwide

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A BLOG BY SERRV

Please visit serrv.org/donate to support these programs with
your tax-deductible donations and for more information.

Global Textures

New hand-loomed rugs from India

We now carry an expanded rug collection! These versatile cotton rugs are woven on hand looms by artisans in Agra, India, combining traditional weaving skills and designs with modern styles and palettes.