



*Suzan Sahori from the West Bank, Esther Mwanyama from Kenya, Tanu Dey from Bangladesh, and Yannina Meza from Peru.*

QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER  
WINTER 2016

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## Women Leaders in Global Fair Trade

Over the years, we have heard and shared numerous beautiful stories about the artisans and farmers who create the fair trade items we offer. Their powerful personal stories of change are the foundation of what this movement is about. We also want to share stories of the inspirational leaders of fair trade handcraft organizations—many of whom are women—who have made it their life’s mission to advocate on behalf of disadvantaged artisans. These women and their peers have built the global fair trade handcraft movement. Below, leaders from four of our fair trade partner organizations describe what fair trade means to them.

One of Serrv’s handcraft partners in the West Bank is Bethlehem Fair Trade Artisans (BFTA). Its founder, Suzan Sahori, previously worked in the public sector, where she met and spoke with marginalized artisans who depend on the tourist market to sell their goods. *“They depend largely on international visitors, which is an unsustainable source of income. Tourism decreases every time there is a political turbulence...I felt passionate about their cause and wanted to help them,”* she says.

She discovered fair trade and the potential solution it would offer for artisans’ struggles in Bethlehem. This led her to establish BFTA. Suzan continues, *“Fair Trade has brought new hope to our producers; it empowers them with a unique understanding of their rights as hardworking producers, gave them power to stand in front of those who are taking advantage of them and mistreating them. They know that BFTA is ready to support them facing their life obstacles; they know they are getting their fair share of payment, and building new fair sales channels.”*

In Kenya, sustainable employment and good quality of life is extremely hard to achieve for people with disabilities. Serrv partner Bombolulu Workshops and

Cultural Center provides rare opportunities for the physically handicapped, with Esther Mwanyama as their dedicated leader.

*“People with disabilities now have an opportunity to do something meaningful and earn income. They are able to have families, take their children to school, and have health benefits and housing, all as a result of fair trade. Seeing them living as dignified members in the communities, where they were initially discriminated against—especially women—this really motivates me,”* Esther tells us.

Tanu Dey is the dynamic director of Dhaka Handicrafts in Bangladesh. She emphasizes the importance of empowering women and sending girls to school which are achieved through fair trade. She explains that many female artisans were forced to marry at a young age and therefore did not have the opportunity to attend school. This is changing within artisan families, with increasing priority given to education instead of early marriage.

*“When I see our artisan families giving importance to their daughters’ education and sending them to school, I feel an inner satisfaction of my work and involvement in fair trade. When I talk with these young girls and they tell me their dream to be a teacher, nurse, join the army or become an entrepreneur, it inspires me so much. That is the change fair trade has made*

*happen in the last 25 years among the rural families.”*

Manos Amigas in Peru has been a Serrv partner since 1992, and their Director, Yannina Meza, previously worked for Serrv. When we asked Yannina what fair trade means to her, she shared this story of an artisan who came to Lima fleeing abuse from an alcoholic husband.

*“Rosa took her 9 children and came to Lima looking for work opportunities. She had learned from her father to make small animals out of sheep and alpaca wool...Manos Amigas made contact with her and started working on samples until she received an order. The order helped her buy land, and now she has been able to build a home and workshop, educate their 9 children and move ahead. Achievements like this example motivate us to keep working!”*

Suzan, Esther, Tanu, Yannina and so many other women in the fair trade movement work tirelessly on behalf of the marginalized artisans they empower. We are inspired by their passion and dedication and thank them for all they do for artisans and farmers around the world!

*We will be featuring additional women leaders of the global fair trade movement on our blog ([blog-serrv.org](http://blog-serrv.org)) and our Facebook page. Be sure to follow us to meet more inspiring leaders!*

## Fair Trade Offers an Escape from Human Trafficking



In Nepal, the unemployment rate is 38% and per capita income is less than \$200 a month. The devastating result is that many young women are forced into the modern day equivalent of slavery.

Serrv, working with its partners including Get Paper Cooperative (pictured here), offers a way out through a coordinated approach of basic education, vocational training, on-the-job work experience and sustainable employment.

Recent Get Paper projects funded by Serrv include rebuilding and equipping a school damaged in the earthquake, purchasing solar power equipment to operate their office and computers, assisting with scholarships for girls to attend

school, and supporting job training for women rescued from human trafficking. This is just one example of the many ways your contributions help marginalized women create better lives.

**Please join us in this work with your tax-deductible donation\*.**

Use the enclosed envelope to send your contribution today, donate online at [serrv.org/donate](http://serrv.org/donate), or call 1.800.423.0071.

Visit us to at [serrv.org/impact](http://serrv.org/impact) to learn more about how your support is changing lives.

**Thank you!**

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

# Women Weave



*"The baskets give me life; they are everything to me."*

- Elisabet Ngometulu,  
basket weaver, Swaziland

Throughout Africa, Serrv artisans are renowned for beautiful woven baskets. The dyes, materials, and techniques used can vary by region, lending distinct patterns and color combinations based on the artisan group's location. Regardless of these different locations and designs, the stories of empowerment through steady income are common to all.

Elisabet Ngometulu is a master basket weaver in Swaziland who has been weaving for almost 30 years. Before weaving baskets for Serrv partner Tintsaba, she was unemployed and unsure of what the future held for her. Weaving has given her stability. She now has a proper home and has been able to send her five children to school (and will also support her three grandchildren with school expenses).

Weaving baskets has given women like Elisabet the opportunity to live better lives and support their families. Through each of these distinctive works of art, stability and promise result.



# Hurricane Matthew Affects Artisans

*"The devastation is horrible in the south!"* Those were the first words we received from Gisele Fleurant, the leader of our partner Comite Artisanal Haitien (CAH) in Haiti after Hurricane Matthew hit. We heard from her again the next day:

*"Lots, lots of damage! CAH has artisans in the South who lost everything! I managed to talk to three of them and asked them to come to Port-au-Prince to give them whatever food and clothing we have collected and some money for basic things they need. I want also to let them share their experience and tell us what they need. Of course, for them the biggest challenge will come after the clean up, when they have to rebuild their houses."*

As you have heard in the news, while Haiti slowly worked to recover from the devastating earthquake of 2010, Hurricane Matthew made a new path of destruction in October 2016. More than 1,000 lives were lost and over 1 million people need assistance such as food, shelter, and medical care. They also need jobs, schools, and comfort as they strive—again—to rebuild and move on.

Serrv has been in partnership with Comite Artisanal Haitien since 1976. They work with artisans who create beautiful and unique recycled metal artwork, riverstone carvings, and handpainted wood products. Seven of their artisan groups lost their houses, workshops, clothing, and more. Each of these groups employs 4-20 apprentice-artisans who were also directly affected.

Hearing directly from Gisele, who we know very well (she served on our Board of Directors for several years), makes the hurricane's effects more personal, and more real. A significant yet intangible value of Serrv's long-term partnerships is exemplified time and again when we can be in solidarity with our partners through difficult times. Knowing that we care, and that we are trying to assist them and offer moral support, makes a difference as they work through challenges.

To financially assist CAH, Serrv sent initial emergency relief funds right away which were used for vital supplies. We are accepting donations for further assistance. Purchases of our Haitian items also helps us to provide future orders so artisans have the opportunity to earn vital income and rebuild. Find handcrafts and coffee at [serrv.org/haiti](http://serrv.org/haiti), and see the facing page for donation information.



*Gisele Fleurant gives financial and moral support to artisan Jean Etienne Ostine following his losses from Hurricane Matthew.*



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 by providing opportunity and support  
 to artisans and farmers worldwide

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*Health Camp in Nepal*

Serrv partner Kumbeshwar Technical School in Kathmandu, Nepal is committed to providing opportunity to the most marginalized members of their community. They offer education, health camps, job training, employment, and more, and also run an orphanage.

*Find their beautiful knits and jewelry at [serrv.org](http://serrv.org).*