

ANNUAL REPORT 2013 - 2014



Creative Handicrafts

Women's self employment center



“ constantly with us in our works and values...” ”

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Women
are the
real architects
of society.

Harriet Beecher Stowe



Try not to resist the changes that come your way. Instead, let life live through you. And do not worry that your life is turning upside down. How do you know that the side you are used to is better than the one to come?

Rumi

As we look back at our journey after the completion of another year, we echo the words of Rumi. Our growth as an organization and the individual growth of our members have taken us to a new level. At the same time we feel great joy in being able to sustain and strengthen what our founder and guide Sr. Isabel Martin MCJ started in 1984.

Sr. Isabel taught the women members that a change in their outlook to life and the acquisition of a new skill can remove them from their oppressive environments. This change has today positively altered the power equation in their families, a change that they would not have imagined before or a change that they perhaps even feared. CH aims to bring about a change in the life situation of 860 women through their Participation in Cooperatives and Saving and Credit Groups. With a view to create a greater impact on the future generations. Creative Handicrafts continues to run Preschools, a Child Development centre and provide Sponsorship for the children.

This year we salute the Women of Change, the women who are able to look beyond their current situation to embrace the challenges of the Future. The women who are able to comprehend, that what is to come in their lives, will surely be better than their current oppressive situations.

from the chairperson

Over the years, Creative Handicrafts has grown immensely in all its areas of intervention. One of the initiatives taken during this year has been the decision of the board of trustees to give an educational scholarship to a bright and hard-working girl student who is pursuing higher education. We see this as an encouragement for the girl child that has been a core value for CH from the beginning.

Last year there have been sessions and events that were aimed at the holistic growth of the women and their families. The women at Creative Handicrafts have been capacitated with different trainings related to challenges they face in their daily lives. These trainings enable them to make appropriate decisions. The women have realized the importance of education in changing the lives of the children. They have taken the opportunity that Creative Handicrafts has provided. Now many of women's children are pursuing higher education and doing well with their studies.

Various health camps and checkups had been organized to provide periodic access to health facilities for both the women and the children. There are efforts made to get more orders so that all the women can earn well and we are also trying to increase our local sales through our shops and exhibitions cum sales. All the women felt very proud that a new shop was inaugurated in Kandivali. We see this as an opportunity to involve more women in the groups and to economically empower many more women to break free from the oppressive attitudes within their family and the community.

Over the years I have personally seen this change in the women. Being part of the group has not only helped them to earn money to support their families. But this belonging to the group has also helped them to look at their situations differently. We have come together as one family to help each other grow.

I am very content that I am associated with Creative Handicrafts for so many years and wish that the next year will be of great success for all the women.

Lalita Pawar

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The fastest way to change society is to mobilize the women of the world.

Charles Malik



from the director

Dear Friends,

Creative Handicrafts has completed 30 years of its work among women and children. It is indeed difficult for a development organization to remain in business for such a long period of time. CH feels proud today for remaining successful and during these past 30 years.

One of the reasons for our success over the past years has been our focus. Creative Handicrafts has always identified itself as an organization striving to provide economic and social empowerment to women with a special emphasis on economic empowerment. We have had many opportunities to branch out into community development, health care, education of children, etc. However, CH resolved to remain focussed and invested money, energy and time into an area that it knows best, economic development program. I have learnt over the years that we have limited resources in terms of money and time and hence, a concentrated effort in a limited area of operation can only bring about an impact that we development workers yearn for.

The past couple of years have been difficult years internationally for business. It had taken a hit on Creative Handicrafts as well. Every year, our effort has been to find one new buyer for the products of CH and we have been successful in the same.

CH has been blessed with organizations and individuals who relentlessly support every initiative of ours. Our buyers love to visit CH and I am very happy to hear their comment on CH, that the atmosphere at CH is truly Fair Trade and is very positive. So our effort in the coming years would be to remain positive and focussed.

The year that has gone by was a good year for CH. That was possible mainly because of the hard work of our staff and women, generosity of our ever loyal supporters and buyers, the constant guidance and hand holding of our trustees and finally the blessings of our founder, Sr. Isabel Martin. I take this opportunity to thank them all for standing by us at all times.

Thankyou,

Johny Joseph
Director



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A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform.

Diane Mariechild

mission

Creative Handicrafts aims to build self sustainable and self reliant communities through economic and socio-cultural empowerment of unskilled and disadvantaged women.

values

To be a fair-trade organization by maintaining and implementing fair trade principles and practices

To be open and inclusive and not to discriminate on grounds of race, religion, caste or sexual orientation

Taking affirmative action on behalf of women who are disadvantaged and unskilled

objectives

To provide opportunity for disadvantaged women to be economically self reliant.

To socially and economically empower women.

To tackle social and environmental issues and to provide local services to the members of the cooperatives and for people living in the slums.

To provide basic education and educational assistance to the children of the slum communities.

events

NEW SHOP IN KANDIVALI

With a view to increasing the sale of the products made by the women of CH, a new shop was inaugurated in Kandivali East on the 25th of October 2013. The occasion was graced by the presence of Dr Ajanta Yadav the corporator of R South Ward. With this new shop, Creative Handicrafts now runs a total of 3 retail stores including the shops at Andheri and Bandra.

FOUNDERS DAY CELEBRATION

CH has resolved to celebrate 7th January, every year, as the founders day as it is the birthday of the founder of CH, Sr. Isabel Martin. On the 7th of January 2014 founder's day was celebrated for the first time. A cultural event was put together by the women, staff and children associated with Creative Handicrafts. Various cultural programs were held and the children enacted a heartwarming play on the life of Sr. Isabel. The 'Sr. Isabel Martin Educational Scholarship' was announced. The evening ended with a fellowship dinner.

TRIBUTE TO A WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE AND STRENGTH

The 17th of March 2014 marked the 1st death anniversary of our mentor and mother Sr. Isabel Martin MCJ. Remembering our journey of a year without her physical presence, we acknowledged the blessing and spiritual support she continues to be for us at Creative Handicrafts. A mass was celebrated at Sacred Heart Church followed by a time of sharing of experiences as well as a meal at Cheshire home. We thank all those who have supported us in our loss and who joined us from near and far on this day.



CH IS GOTS CERTIFIED

Promotion of consumption of organic products, food and textile, has evolved to be the answer to many health issues and environmental issues that one is confronted with on a day to day basis. Use of organic textile has come a long way in European countries and Creative Handicrafts also has equipped itself with the requirements for production of Organic cotton garments. As a result, CH has been General Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) certified by the Control Union in April, 2014.

THE BREATH OF LIFE PROJECT

In our work in various slum and Tribal communities, it was noticed that many people were not aware of what Tuberculosis is and how to deal with it. Also, several incidences of TB were prevalent in the community. Based on this information, CH designed a Project called, "The Breath of Life Project". This included TB awareness, screening, X rays and fixing doctor's appointments. This project was aimed at partnering with the government in order to ensure that TB health care reaches the community. This project covered all the women members their families and staff. It was conducted by Govt. TB health post Andheri over a period of 2 months, with sessions every Saturday, followed by screening and doctors appointments. Patients detected are now well on their way to recovery

CH Social Outcome 2013-14

IMPACT MADE ON WOMEN & CHILDREN THROUGH CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS

736

Number of women who were provided means of livelihood in co-operatives and on part time basis

190

Number of children benefitted from Day Care



73

Number of sessions organized for women empowerment and capacity building programmes

206

Number of children who were impacted through Balwadis



446

Number of children who underwent health checkups

145

Number of children who were sponsored in their education

54

Number of women who provided training for tailoring

9

Number of Balwadis operated



75

Number of Saving and Credit Groups

350

Number of customers served through Asli Foods on daily basis

75

Numbers of Sales and Exhibitions organized



CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS
GUARANTEED
FAIR TRADE



Economic Justice

Fair Trade Producer Groups

Creative Handicrafts does not focus on skill training alone. The Cooperative producer groups offer women a chance to earn a regular dignified livelihood with good working conditions and a fair wage. It provides the economic leverage that enables them to surmount the everyday challenges they face. This translates into sustenance for many of the women who are the sole breadwinners in their families



Nila had a happy childhood. Societal pressures compelled her family to get her married at the tender age of 17. Unknown to her, her husband was an alcoholic. He began to physically abuse her. With no support from her in laws Nila moved back to her parent's home. CH intervened and convinced her husband to go to rehab. Seeing his efforts to stop drinking Nila supported him and moved back with the children to live with him. However, her relief was short lived. He started to drink and beat her again. Realizing that there was little chance for reconciliation CH supported her to buy a house. Today she works at CH and lives peacefully with her children away from her husband

Marketing and Sale initiatives

Over the years CH has realized that no matter how many slum and tribal women we bring into our fold, there are many more that need to be empowered socially and economically. New product orders translate into more work for the groups and more work implies that we can extend our training to more women producer groups



Market Promotion

Information about the products made by the women of Creative Handicrafts has spread through the various recommendations of partners and friends. Besides this, flyers and banners are sent out to inform people about special events and sales. This year has seen an increase in our focus on Social media outreach. Our face book page is updated with information about the various events held with the women and the children, Product pictures and special offers as well. A tri monthly Newsletter called CH times keeps our friends, customers and partners abreast about the happenings at CH. This year a review on the feasibility of online marketing was conducted by the student interns. Creative Handicrafts continues to explore new areas of growth and opportunities to take new women into its fold.

Corporate Exhibitions

The women of the Cooperatives continue to step out in confidence. As part of our outlook to empowerment, we encourage the women not just to make the products but also to take turns to accompany us to the locations and help us in selling them. This gives the women an idea of the products currently in the market and how well their own work is received. It introduces them to other organizations working with different groups. This year we had a total of 75 exhibitions.

A few Companies, Hotels and Banks that we would like to mention are; HSBC Bank, HDFC Bank, Citi Bank, Axis Bank, Standard Chartered Bank , Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai and Taj Lands End, Tata Consultancy Services, Larsen and Toubro (Powai and Airoli), Concern India Foundation, Akruiti Trade Centre, Government Law College, St. Xavier's College Mumbai, Sydhenam College, Nirmala Niketan College of Social work, Sophia College Ex- Students Association

Setting up an Exhibition at Kala Ghoda this year was an amazing Experience. It was very encouraging to see the people's response to the products made by the women's groups.

School uniform initiative

Creative Handicrafts in collaboration with Dominic Savio High School initiated a project where the School and Sports uniforms for the children were stitched by our various women groups. The parents are encouraged to purchase uniforms made by the Cooperatives. This injects a social message and a social consciousness into both the parents and children. Special discounts were offered to the deserving student's in the school and the hostel. Approximately 40 percent of the School uniforms and 60 per cent of the Sports uniforms were sold this year.

Our association with Hindustan Unilever continues. We thank them for the regular orders for cloth bags that they place every month. Many individuals continue to do their bit in spreading information about our mission. They support us in sales by purchasing from us and selling our products. We thank them for their active involvement.

Asli Food



In its early years Project Asli foods was created as an income generation activity for women who could not pick up the skill of sewing. Instead of turning them away, Creative Handicrafts turned this shortcoming into an opportunity to reach out to more women, by creating a service where home cooked meals are delivered to the doorstep. Today Asli foods provides 450 dabbas besides providing catering services for parties and big functions.

Saving and Credit Groups

A regular income is a source of security for a family. However, Creative Handicrafts, drawing from its experiences, realized that earning combined with saving is the only way to ensure that the women do not fall into a debt cycle with Money lenders. Thus the saving and credit groups were born. In the year 2013-14 Creative Handicrafts supported a total of 75 saving and credit groups with 767 women. The total savings of the women as of 31st March 2014 was Rs. 67,14,991. Once enrolled, the women save a fixed amount per month. 6 months after they join they are entitled to loans for educational purposes, medical emergencies, entrepreneurial activities and any other reason as approved by the group. In order to contribute to their social empowerment, small groups of women are called together for sessions on topics like female feticide and how to deal with and identify child abuse



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There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.

Graham Greene



Services of Education and Health

In response to the educational and nutritional needs of poor children from slum and tribal communities Creative Handicrafts initiated the Balwadis, BalVikas Kendra and Crèche



Balwadis/Preschool

Children aged 2.5 to 5 years from the slum and tribal area in Andheri and Goregaon Aarey milk colony benefit from the Balwadi project. The purpose of the 9 Balwadis is 2 fold; the first is to impart education and the second, to provide one nutritious meal. The CH Balwadis aim at providing foundational learning and ensuring that the child is enrolled into school at the right age. Along with this, a nutritious meal was also introduced in order to deal with the many cases of malnutrition, especially among the tribal children. In the year 2013-14, a total of 206 children benefitted from the regular classes, sports activities and celebrations. Skill training workshops were conducted to demonstrate to the teachers' fun techniques to teach the children.

Various activities are held with a view of helping the children to bond and form healthy friendships. Last year, the children were brought together to celebrate all the major festivals like Diwali and Christmas and national holidays like Independence Day. The little ones were given a special treat and presents on Children's day. The picnic cum sports event at the Sanjay Gandhi National Park was enjoyable for the children as well as those who accompanied them,



Crèche/BalVikas Kendra



Crèche facilities are provided for the women belonging to the CH cooperatives. It serves as a place for the children to rest and study. For a small fee of Rs. 10 per month, mothers working with CH can leave their small children in the Crèche. Last year, around 60 children benefitted from the facilities provided at the crèche.

Like the crèche the BalVikas Kendra (BVK) was initiated to provide a conducive environment for a healthy interaction among the children. Children aged 3 to 16 years come to the BVK. These children are from disadvantaged families in the community. A study has shown that without the facilities of the BVK the children would have dropped out of school or not pursued higher education. Last year the BVK served 130 children

Besides the various celebrations that are held with all the children, certain specific activities like Career Guidance Workshops are held for the children of the BVK. Last year 2 such workshops were conducted. These are crucial to help the children, make the right choices for their future. A summer workshop was organized with the idea of utilizing fun learning techniques.

Educational Sponsorship

Creative Handicrafts knows that being disadvantaged is not fate decided by birth but rather by circumstance. We believe that given the right opportunities children will excel. Educational sponsorship is provided to 145 children to help them realize their dream. Sponsorship is given both to the children of our women as well as to other deserving children in the community.



Health Awareness Programmes



Good health determines the quality and capacity of the women to juggle their work and their family life. Many women neglect their health for the sake of their family or due to insufficient finances. Preventive care is of low priority in the community as a whole. In order to fill this vacuum and to establish the importance of preventive care, Creative Handicrafts provides periodic medical examinations and camps at the Cooperatives, Crèche, Balwadis and BalVikas Kendra.

This year the lists of camps are as follows;

Type of Health Check up	Frequency in 2013-14
General Health Check up for children	4
Eye Check up camps for women and children	2
Special Medical check ups for children	6

Gender Justice

Trainings conducted for women



Creative handicrafts focuses not only on providing a dignified employment but also various avenues for the all round development of the women. Capacity building topics were selected based on our experiences of the challenges faced by the women in the community. These sessions were held with the Cooperatives as well as with the various Saving and credit groups in the community

Fire Safety



**Environmental Safety
and Water Conservation**



**TB Awareness
and Training**

Money Lenders



**Identifying
Gender
based violence**

Basics in First Aid



**Support to families
of Alcoholics**

**Solutions to
Gender based
violence**

Work Ethics



Sale of Products in Creative Handicrafts for the last 3 years



Year	Domestic	Exports	Total
2013 - 14	72,67,705	7,82,91,743	8,55,59,448
2012 - 13	43,53,958	6,00,45,725	6,43,99,683
2011 - 12	42,76,326	7,28,18,601	7,70,94,928

Vision for the Future



Organizations or individuals that stop innovating, changing and growing will cease to exist. CH also needs to be constantly innovating and growing. Our initiatives like organic garment production, school uniforms, new retail shops, etc. are all part of our innovation and growth plan. Our training centers are full with new women learning stitching skills and there is a big back log of applications from very deserving women from the communities. This calls for further expansion of our cooperatives. So we aim to increase the market and the number of cooperatives simultaneously.

One of our concerns have been the percentage of rejection and the efficiency of the women in the cooperatives. An initial assessment proved that our efficiency level is much less than that of a normal garment making organization. There is a huge potential for increasing productivity and thus increasing the earnings of women. CH would pay a lot of attention in this regard in the coming year. The focus would be to reduce rejection and improve efficiency.

partners and collaborators

:Partners and Collaborators

Bibico - UK

Castilla y Leon - Spain

CCFD – France

Comunidad de Madrid – Spain

CTM Altromercato - Italy

Earth Divas – USA

El Puente – Germany

Fair Trade Company – Japan

Fair Trade Forum India – India

HossIntropia -Spain

Intermon Oxfam – Spain

James Percy Foundation – UK

Les Amin De JNNnn – France

Marigold – USA

Mata Traders – USA

Missionaries of Christ Jesus – India and Spain

Monoprix – France

PeopleTree - UK

Pueblos Hermanos – Spain

Serrv - USA

Setem – Spain

Sisam - Japan

Society of the Divine Word – India

Solidar Monde – France

SIGNALETIQUE - France

Traid Craft – U.K

Tuck Tuck Community S. L. – Spain

Twine – Taiwan

Van Guard - Taiwan

WFTO – Netherlands

WFTO Asia – Philippines

Yuan Mei Handbags CO.LTD - Japan

governing board



Beula Jose
Member



Ms. Elizabeth Poojari
Secretary



Ms. Pamela Fernandez
Treasurer



Tanganani Nadar
Member



Sr. Jacinta
Member



Laxmi Degvekar
Member



Lalita Pawar
President



Mr. Josantony Joseph
Member



Mr. Johny Joseph
Executive Director

the people behind the scenes





Creative Handicrafts

Women's self employment center

D. P. Road, (Road No. 11),
MIDC, Off Mahakali Caves Road,
Andheri East, Mumbai -400 093, India.

Tel: +91 22 28373096, 28324692

Fax: +91 22 28379268

Email: info@creativehandicrafts.org

Website: <http://www.creativehandicrafts.org>

