

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15



Creative Handicrafts

Empowering Women, Changing Lives





It is my dream
that all women should
become independent
and live a dignified life.

SR. ISABEL MARTIN



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I have always believed that one woman's success can help another woman's success

GLORIA VANDERBILT

If you do good, good will be done to you.

CROATIAN PROVERB



We at Creative Handicrafts (CH) aim at doing good in the lives of the women that we seek to empower and the disadvantaged communities that we work in. We are seeing with every passing year that this positive goal is making us stronger and partnering us with more people around the world that have the same vision.

Sr. Isabel always believed that if our motives are right then everything would work out for our good. These wise words resonate in the lives of the thousands of women, men and children that are part of the CH family.

The cooperatives have seen many new women join after being trained at the CH training centers. The Saving and Credit groups have expanded in number and now there are a total of 109 groups across many slum and tribal areas. The number of children being supported in their education through sponsorship program has increased. The child development center (Balvikas Kendra), pre schools (Balwadis) and crèche continue to take more children as we believe that strong educational foundation is vital to build a better future for these kids.

Towards the end of the financial year 2014 – 2015 CH ventured into a field that beckoned its intervention for a long time. This was based on an urgent need to free women from violence at home and in communities. This 3 year project has been initiated with the generous support of Manos Unidas. Although CH has been successful in economically empowering the women to a great extent, there remained always a doubt whether CH has be able make the desired change in the minds of women and thus bring about a social empowerment as well of the women. Many women still suffered from domestic violence and CH was convinced that it has a call to free every woman associated with it from any kind of violence.

Letter from the Chairperson



Being the Chairperson of Creative Handicrafts there are 2 things that give me a sense of fulfillment; new women joining the cooperatives and new organizations partnering with us. I know these would also have made our founder, Sr. Isabel, very happy.

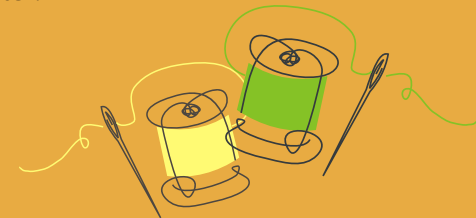
With the opening of a new training center the no. of women joining the cooperatives has increased consistently. One of the changes introduced in the cooperatives with regard to induction of new members upon completion of training has worked very well for the new members and the cooperatives. The change is to encourage a senior member of the cooperatives to mentor a new member until she can independently work and produce quality garments. This has

resulted in a smooth induction of new members into the cooperatives and has resulted in faster induction.

The new Fair Trade partners, from India and all over the world, bring in a great sense of hope and happiness to us. As we attach the label of a new buyer on our product there is a sense of joy that we are growing and there are more people that want to partner and trade with us. Buyers that are there with us for years give us a sense of reassurance that we are able to keep up to their standards.

Then there is the ever constant that is change. We constantly change for better. The most important and substantial change that I see is the change of us from an unsettled difficult life situation to rather settled one. Our children are excelling and working in good positions and taking care of us, parents. It is here that CH accomplishes its objectives and the women move out of CH to make way for others to experience the same. For many it is difficult to move on from the comfort zone of the family of CH. But we are open to change because it has brought us where we are today. So as the year comes to an end we usher in the new, we welcome change...change for the better.

Lalita Pawar
Chairperson



from the director



It is my pleasure to present to you, on behalf of the Trustees, members and staff of Creative Handicrafts (CH), our Annual Report for 2014-2015. We have made an effort to make the report brief and to focus on matters that are priority areas for Creative Handicrafts. One of the most important goals for CH for the last couple of years was to make this organization a sustainable one, both financially and otherwise. Today CH can proudly say that it has achieved financial independence as far as its operations are concerned. Definitely, new initiatives and further growth calls for external support and our generous benefactors have always been supporting our continuous growth.

One of the pressing problems that disturbed the conscience of all associated with the organization is prevalence of violence against women, both physical and otherwise, that is rampant in the families and the communities. Instances of violence have become so common that the Indian society has become quite immune to it. CH always felt that it has been able to achieve tremendous improvements in the lives of women who are associated with CH in terms of economic growth, economic freedom and dignity. However, it pains to see a woman reporting back to work at our cooperatives the next day after getting brutally beaten up by her husband or in laws. Many a time we remain helpless as we have nothing better to offer her than counseling her to return home to get beaten up again.

In the light of this, CH has initiated a project to free women from physical violence. To me this is the most important project that we have initiated recently and the response of the women and the community seems to be very encouraging. The project is going through constant adaptation as we realize that we have many areas to work on to stop violence totally. For example, we have realized that children need to be raised with a sense of respect for women and men need to be trained to respect women. So men, children and women form an important part of the stakeholders of the project. We do hope that the project is able to bring about a sense of peace in the families.

2014-2015 has been a good year for CH. While the economic development program recorded 15% growth the community development program added a few more new projects. The credit definitely goes to the staff members who had to work relentless to keep CH on its growth trajectory. Addition of new staff members and women beneficiaries is a welcome change in the organization. Our trustees have been an inspiration and support and have always been available for guidance and help on just a phone call. Finally, it is also time to thank all our partners, both fair trade and others, who have stood by CH for another year and all our success is due to their constant support.

Thank you,

Johnny Joseph
Director

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.



“We dream that women,
Unskilled and disadvantaged,
Can change their own worlds.
And then,
Like a ripple turning into a tide
Women can change our world

We believe in
up holding the dignity
of every individual;

being open and inclusive
and not discriminating
on any ground;

standing up for the disadvantaged;

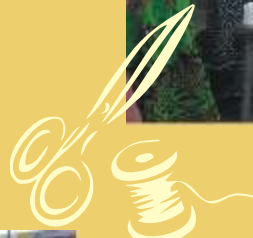
becoming a fair trade organization
in all aspects of our work. “

**Josantony Joseph, Trustee,
Creative Handicrafts.**

events

THE GROWING CH FAMILY

In December 2014 Creative Handicrafts launched a new training center in Mahakali Caves Road Andheri. With the existing training center full to capacity and with a long list of women waiting to be trained we finally decided to start a new training center to meet the rising number of women that were approaching us for employment. This center has 15 women trainees at all times and the vacancies created by passed out trainees are immediately filled by the wait listed ones. 17 women who completed training and joined the cooperatives during the past one year were given certificates of completion of training.



CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS AT THE FASHION CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

World Fair Trade Organization had its biennial conference at Milan Italy in 2015. Eminent writer, activist and journalist P. Sainath was a guest speaker at the event. An exhibition of Fair Trade products followed. CH was proud to put up a stall to display and sell beautiful garments and accessories that was specially designed for the occasion. All the designs in the collection were inspired by the WFTO logo. The products were very well received and all the products especially that of children are women were completely sold out!





CELEBRATING THE JOY OF BEING A WOMAN

The Women's day was celebrated at all the cooperatives with a difference. The occasion was a time for personal reflection, sharing and enjoyment. Each of the groups played various games to their hearts content and then sat down for a "sharing of self" which was to share with one another about the happiest moment of their lives. This gave an opportunity for the women to know one another more closely and also to reflect on the various things that make their life happy and meaningful.



The groups were given an opportunity to go on an exposure visit to a place of historic importance. Each group got to choose the place they wanted to visit and plan their schedule for the day. This was a landmark moment in their lives since they had never before ventured so far from their house without their families accompanying them. Although many have lived in Mumbai for several years, they had never seen areas like the Chatrapati Shivaji Museum, Borivali National Park or Gateway of India. The objective of this was also to build group bonding within the groups by allowing them to spend time doing things other than their regular work. It has been decided to undertake more of such activities as it results in team building.



YET ANOTHER SHOP, A RETAIL OUTLET IN POWAI

With a view to increasing the sale of the products made by CH women, a new shop was inaugurated in Powai. The occasion was graced by the presence of renowned Bollywood actress Smt. Ratna Pathak. We were ecstatic to learn that she is a frequent customer at our Bandra store and she was delighted at being asked to inaugurate our new shop. She was excited about the new collection and predicted excellent sale of our products. The shop is well received by the public of Powai and the revenue from that shop manifests the same.

EXCITED ABOUT EZA-AUSTRIA

The visit of Ms. Andrea Schlehber, General Manager of EZA, Austria, brought about another Fair Trade Partner to the list FT partners of CH in Europe. EZA has just celebrated its 40 years of Fair Trade and that talks about its legacy in fair trade movement in Europe. We have started designing a collection for them thus launching our new partnership together. She also kept aside time from her busy schedule to have a presentation with the staff about her organization and their work. It was heartening to hear of the good work they are doing across the globe and the fact that all at CH form a link in the global effort to make this world a little less unequal.



CH Social Outcome 2014-15

Impact made on women & children through CH



204

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



187

Number of children who were impacted through Balwadis



56

Number of sessions organized for women empowerment and capacity building programmes



190

Number of children benefitted from Day Care



330

Number of children who underwent health checkups

142

Number of children who were sponsored in their education

8

Number of Balwadis operated

505

Number of Customers served through Asli Foods on a daily basis

109

Number of Saving and Credit Groups

40

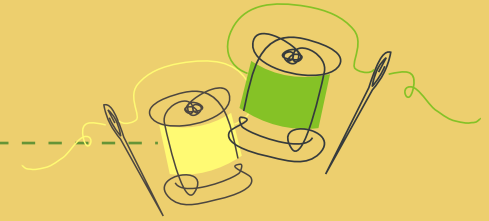
Number of women who provided training for tailoring in stitching



54

Numbers of Sales and Exhibitions organized

Economic Justice



Fair Trade Producer Groups



Creative Handicrafts has 11 income generation groups and 2 training centers. The 2nd training center was established in December 2014 to meet the need to train an increasing number of women who want to join the organization for employment. The number of women in each group is also increasing as the graduated ones are joining the existing groups. The growing size of the groups is a good sign that the organization is meeting its goal of empowering women and is drawing in women in need.

Susheela was working as a construction labourer. Harsh working conditions, erratic and long hours in the scorching heat, poor pay and irregular work with very heavy loads to carry left her in poor finances and health. She knew she had to look for an alternate work although she had no education or skill. She came to know about Creative Handicrafts and joined the training center to learn stitching. She was a keen learner and finished training quickly and started to work at one of the cooperatives. She is now very happy at CH. She is earning well and in good health. She is able to manage her household finances and take care of her children. She benefits from the health insurance, educational sponsorship for children, saving and credit facility and a lot of other services that CH manages for its women members. This has turned her life around and she remains content with the right decision she made of joining CH.

Marketing and Sales



Sales and marketing is the focus of Creative Handicrafts because it makes our income generation project sustainable. Every product that we sell gets translated into a few hours of work for a woman. Every year we target colleges and corporate houses to host us in their premises so that we can set up a stall to exhibit and sell our products. Organizations that have had us once are happy to invite us again year after year. Many new organizations were also added to our list of partners thus resulting in a consistent increase in the sales turnover in the local market.



Market Promotion

Promotion of CH is done by various means such as advertisement boards in strategic locations, pamphlets in newspapers, scratch and win bookmarks, advertisements in local papers, etc. Our newsletter-CH times keeps customers, buyers, partners and well wishers informed about all recent news. Facebook is regularly updated with images of new products, information about sales, opening of new shops and every new venture that CH makes. Please like and follow us on Facebook to know more about our work.

Other Initiatives

Creative Handicrafts continued its collaboration with Dominic Savio High School in producing and providing school and sports uniforms to all the children. The school is proud to partner with us because they are keen on inculcating a sense of social commitment and awareness among the children and the parents.

Our collaboration with Dominic Savio school has also helped in introducing residents of the Andheri locality to Creative Handicrafts and thereby increasing our sales in the Andheri shop.

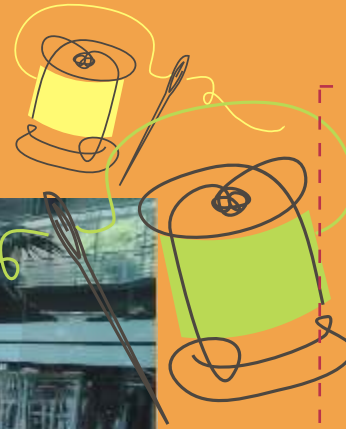
Hindustan Unilever's collaboration with us continues especially with the regular bulk purchase of CH cloth bags which are used by them in their stores.

Many other individuals and organizations have played a crucial role in scaling up our sales this year and we remain gratefully indebted to all of them.

Corporate Exhibitions



Every year Creative Handicrafts put up stalls in various corporate houses and colleges. This is an opportunity to showcase the products of our women, sell a lot of beautiful garments and accessories and also get new customers who soon become regulars at our shops. Events such as the Joy of Giving week, Womens Day, Diwali and Christmas are among the busiest times of the year with several simultaneous sales at various locations. The CSR program of corporate houses is a window of opportunity for organizations like CH to raise awareness of responsible consumption and to sell Fair Trade products.



A few partner organizations that opened its doors to us are:

- HSBC Bank
- HDFC Bank
- Axis Bank
- Standard Chartered Bank
- TajMahal Palace Mumbai and Taj Lands End
- Tata Consultancy Services
- Larsen and Toubro (Powai and Airoli)
- Akruti Trade Centre
- St. Xavier's College, Mumbai
- Sydhenam College, Mumbai
- Nirmala Niketan College of Social work, Mumbai
- Sophia College Ex- Students Association, Mumbai
- Royal Inn Hotel
- U.S. Consulate
- Westin Hotel
- Domestic Airport
- Reliance Broadcast

Asli Food



Asli Food was started as an alternative employment option for those seeking financial independence at CH. This income generation wing of Creative Handicrafts is doing well with 505 lunch boxes being cooked and delivered to office goers on a daily basis. Apart from this Asli Food often receives orders to cater at parties and other such occasions. Asli food employs 15 disadvantaged women on a full time basis.

Saving and Credit Groups

Saving and credit groups were born to ensure that the women associated with Creative Handicrafts as well as other women in the communities do not fall into a debt cycle with money lenders who provide loans on very high rate of interest. Furthermore, it was initiated to inculcate a habit of saving among the poor. Once the group is formed, women save a fixed amount per month and upon completion of 6 months they are entitled to loans for medical emergencies, education of children, entrepreneurial activities, etc. In the year 2014-15 Creative Handicrafts supported a total of 109 saving and credit groups with 1145 women. Total savings of the women from all the groups amounted to Rs. 83, 85,738/-



Health Programs



Medical Camps



Creative Handicrafts conducts periodic medical examinations of all women and children by organizing medical camps at the Cooperatives, Crèche, Balwadis and Bal Vikas Kendra. Specialized medical examination camps on gynecological issues, tuberculosis, cancer detection, eye check up, etc. were organized for all the beneficiaries of CH. Those that needed spectacles were provided the same free of cost and cataract operations were carried out on those requiring it at a concessional rate. A bone density test was also done to identify osteoporosis and calcium deficiency.

Tuberculosis is a hazard that the women and their children are highly exposed to due to the cramped environment they live in. CH has taken the initiative to organize a check up of all the women and children to identify if anyone was suffering from TB. A few were found to be at initial stage and were all put under medication and close monitoring of the social workers.

Education of Children

For the last 15 years CH has been involved in three major projects that cater to the needs of children. The Preschools (Balwadis), Child Development Center (Bal Vikas Kendra) and the Crèche cater to the educational and nutritional needs of children from tribal and slum communities.

Crèche / Bal Vikas Kendra



Crèche facilities are provided for the children, between the age of 6 months to 15 years, of women belonging to the CH cooperatives as well as children from the community. It is a day care center where mothers can drop their children before going to work and children are taken care of and helped in their education. Last year, around 60 children benefitted from the facilities provided at the crèche.



The Child Development center caters to children in the age group of 4 to 17 years from the slum community. The parents of these children are daily wage laborers and they are out for work for the entire day. Hence, there is no one to look after the children and cater to their educational and developmental needs. The day care facility provided by Child Development Center has proved to be very useful for these children. A total of 130 children benefitted from the day care facility in the last year. Children are well assisted in their education as well as provided with a nutritious breakfast and lunch.

Apart from assisting the children in their education, various activities like career guidance workshops, sports day, cultural competitions, picnic, summer workshops and celebration of festivals like Diwali and Christmas are conducted with the children.

In order to develop the skills of the teachers and to strengthen their perceptive about education of these children, they are given various in house training as well as they attend training organized by organizations working in the field of education. These training have proved very useful for all the teachers.

Balwadis/Preschool

In the preschools, children who are young and not part of any formal education system are provided with basic education and initiated to schooling. They are given a basic but firm foundation in languages, maths, concepts in environment and science, so that they can be enrolled in schools after completion of this course. They are also provided with the one nutritious meal. Preschools cater to the children between 3,5 to 7years from the slum areas in Andheri and tribal areas in Goregaon Aarey milk colony. In the year 2014-15, a total of 187children benefitted from the regular classes.

We have also organized celebrations of different festivals like Diwali, Christmas and days of national importance like Republic Day and Independence Day with children. Children were taken to Picnic point garden in Goregaon, where they participated in games like throw ball, running, obstacle race, marble and spoon race and also enjoyed in the various joy rides at the garden.



A child without education is like a bird without wings

TIBETIAN PROVERB

Educational Sponsorship

Education is the most important tool if one wants to change his/her life and we do not want children being denied of this opportunity only because of their poor financial background. Creative Handicrafts provides educational sponsorship to the children of our women as well as other deserving children in the community, so that they are able to continue with their education and fulfill their dreams. Last year 142 children were helped with educational sponsorship.

Freedom from violence



Creative handicrafts focuses not only on providing a dignified employment but also various avenues for the all round development of women. Violence against women is a pressing issue that CH has been trying to combat. With this in mind we are implementing a project on Freedom from violence against women in slum and tribal areas of Mumbai.

The women beneficiaries have been surveyed to assess the extent of violence they have been exposed to in their lives. The survey ascertained that 70% of the women have faced violence with a high percentage of them facing intense violence. Focused group discussions were conducted with married couples to understand their attitudes towards violence. The data collected was worrying and showed an urgent need to intervene not only in situations of violence but also to change mind sets so that violence is no more perpetuated. This change in attitude is needed not only among women but most importantly among men who are the perpetrators of violence. Further, the project identified children as a major stake holder in the project they are the ones who will change our tomorrows. It was found absolutely necessary to bring about positive attitude towards women among children.

Training is focused on building better families and therefore reducing the occurrence of violence in homes. Several training has already been conducted with women on perspective building on gender and sex. Children attended training on gender sex and growing up. Street plays were conducted in the slum community on parenting and training on the same was taken with single parents and married couples.

Women who faced violence and who desired and needed to get out of this situation of violence or oppression were assisted by supporting them with shelter and employment. Counseling for women and children is taking place on a regular basis and this is causing many lives to change for the better.



Adolescent Training on Growing Up



Couple's Day



Perspective Building on Gender and Sex



Training on Parenting



Street Play



All we can
tell you is that
she was a
hard working
woman

STANLEY JOHNSON



Sales turnover for the past 3 years

Year	Domestic	Exports	Total
2014-2015	89,53,979	7,83,07,630	8,72,61,609
2013-2014	72,67,705	7,82,91,743	8,55,59,448
2012-2013	43,53,958	6,00,45,725	6,43,99,683

Looking Ahead



One of our concerns during the past few years was the lack of quality of our products and the level of rejections that caused low productivity and increased cost of production. We had promised that we will address this issue in the coming year and we are glad to note here that the consultancy services of an organization specialized in garment manufacturing helped CH fix number of issues with regard to quality and cost of production.

CH depends on international market/exports to provide livelihood to the women producers. 80 to 90 percent of its turnover is based on exports. It has been brought to the notice of the trustees and the management of CH that relying totally on international market, which is prone to fluctuations in demand, might be a bit risky and hence, there is a need to develop domestic market for the products of CH. A consistent demand for our products in domestic market means a continuous flow of work for a couple of cooperatives. As a result, CH has opened three outlets in Mumbai and the future plan would be to concentrate on opening more shops and thus build a brand of CH in Mumbai first and the rest of the country gradually.

CH has been investing a lot of time and energy on a number of non corecommunity development programs like, primary education for children, dealing with issues of the communities, saving and credit program, etc. The next initiative would be to institutionalize these programs so that they are all independent programs and the main thrust and focus of CH remains with its Fair Trade and livelihood programs.

We do hope to continue to grow in both the international and domestic market.

partners and collaborators



Bibico - UK

CCFD - France

Les Amis de JNN-France

Comunidad de Madrid - Spain

CTM Altromercato - Italy

Dermalogica-USA

El Puente - Germany

EZA- Austria

Fair Trade Company - Japan

Fair Trade Forum India - India

HossIntropia -Spain

Intermon Oxfam - Spain

James Percy Foundation -UK

Manos Unidas-Spain

Mata Traders - USA

Missionaries of Christ Jesus - India and Spain

Monoprix - France

People Tree - UK

Serrv - USA

Setem - Spain

Sisam - Japan

Society of the Divine Word - India

Traid Craft - U.K

Tramundi-Spain

Twine - Taiwan

WFTO - Netherlands

WFTO Asia - Philippines

Yuan Mei Handbags Co. Ltd. - Japan

governing board



LALITA PAWAR
President



ELIZABETH POOJARI
Secretary



PAMELA FERNANDEZ
Treasurer



JOHNY JOSEPH
Executive Director



JACINTA CANIS
Trustee



LAXMI DEGVEKAR
Trustee



TANGARANI NADAR
Trustee



JOSANTONY JOSEPH
Trustee



BEULA JOSE
Trustee

the people behind the scens





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Empowering Women, Changing Lives

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