



Aid to Artisans

Summer 2016

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ATA celebrates its 40th anniversary



NY NOW August 2016 marked a significant moment for ATA as we celebrated our 40th Anniversary. Our familiar orange booth was filled with crafts from Mexico, Haiti, Nepal, Turkey, Myanmar, Tibet, and Syrian Refugees living in Turkey. With its colorful dolls and toys, the product collection from Tibet was our bestseller.



Once more, Tibet's Drogenling collection stood out by the vivid colors reflected in the handmade dolls and stuffed toys created by artisans providing sustainable, long-term solutions to the promotion and preservation of Tibetan culture.



Chin-Chili's product collection from Myanmar represented the second best seller for this edition of NY NOW. Their woven textiles, pillows, table runners, and bags were a wonderful addition to the booth.



Our walls were decorated by wonderful paintings and printed stuffed toys made by women artisans from the Janakpur Women Development center in Nepal. This organization was built to create sustainable solutions to support artisans, from Maithil culture. The toy collection and clutches created by Soma artisans based in Turkey gave a wonderful touch to the booth. Residing in the mining town of Soma, Manisa, Turkey, the Soma Artisans initiative, provides economic opportunities for women in that region.



Making their first appearance at NY NOW, Amal (Hope in Arabic), a newly created organization of Syrian women refugees living in Fatih, Turkey, brought beautiful and colorful embroidered jewelry and clutches inspired by memories of Syria. Amal aims to bring a means of financial support to their families by women refugees who are learning to make and sell crafts that are inspired by Syria's great architectural and artistic heritage, including the renowned Damascus tiles and Palmyra mosaics.



ATA Mexico featured a large collection of handmade products from various brands that have worked with its artisan communities in Chiapas including Santa Rosa, Boutique Mexico, Artemateria, Kunu and introduced a collection from its new project Coaching and Assistance for Sustainable Entrepreneurship (CASE) funded by the W.K Kellogg Foundation.



Right across ATA's booth stood for the second time Idea+Materia's wonderful exhibit showing products from Puebla, Mexico. ATA's Idea + Materia seeks to provide 375 artisans from 25 towns in Puebla with intensive training that builds their artistic and business skills, before connecting them with Mexican and International buyers. Booth #419 at NY NOW did just that. The beautiful Palma baskets and mats were once again the center of attention, and more than 300 pieces were sold. Many visitors were drawn to the onyx products and volcanic stone candle holders as well and bought over 200 pieces, making them the second best hit.

ARTESANÍAS DE
PUEBLA





Celebration Fused with Color and Culture



The highlight of the MRP was our annual reception where the display room was buzzing with participants' handmade products ranging from traditional art from Tajikistan, Egypt and India to a blend of the new and old techniques from Peru, Chile, Bolivia and Nicaragua.

Meet the MRP Class of 2016

MRP brings together global entrepreneurs and artisans under one roof.





CEO [Sandler Trade, LLC](#) **Meredith Sandler**'s work is fueled by her passion to make international trade thrive – especially with developing-country producers and U.S. artisans. Currently she is working with Timorese artisans who produce Tais weavings for ceremonial adornment, home decor, and personal apparel. **Anna Rose Ott**, Artisan and Small Business Specialist also representing Sandler Trade. Experienced in working with women artisans in Ghana, Anna is currently completing U.S. market access and identification research for women weaving collectives. Anna has a special interest in better understanding how artisans can most efficiently and sustainably access the U.S. market.



Paulina Elena Retamal Toledo, owner and designer, **Paulina Elena Retamal Iturra E.I.R.L.**, Coyhaique, Chile started her clothing business as a way to use regional raw materials and generate work for small producers. Her colors represent the Patagonian landscape. At the MRP, her interest was to identify strengths and weaknesses of her products in preparation for a more demanding retail market.



Carolina Vergara, manager at **Pura Pampa**, a trained costume designer has extended her talents into the apparel accessory market. Specializing in wool fibers, her designs are contemporary, high quality and unique. She attended the MRP to learn the tools to expand her business locally and internationally.



Deepali Agrawal, General Manager at [Export Bank of India](#), Mumbai, India (**Exim**) shared the Bank's vision to support various crafts and art forms like Ikat, weaving, metal ware craft, embroidery and pottery from the Indian handicraft and handloom sector. Exim Bank seeks to help Indian exporting firms in their export efforts by proactively assisting in locating overseas buyers for their products and services.

Also representing Exim Bank was **Veerbhadr Singh Janwar** manager at the Bank. In addition to learning more about current trends and designs, Veerbhadra looks forward to the opportunity to meet potential importers and connect them directly to grass-roots enterprises that are provided with finance and marketing assistance from the Exim bank.



General manager of **Manos Nicas, Nicaragua**, **Franklin Sanchez's** company "sells crafts, giving an added value, quality controls, fair prices and support in designing and improving artisans products". Franklin's goal at the MRP was to understand the workings of the US market, assess viability of his products in the United States and learn from similar organizations who have been successful in the handicrafts sector.

[Community Jameel](#) in **Saudi Arabia** is a social enterprise operates initiatives in the artisan sector, including Art Jameel, a traditional arts and crafts program in Cairo, Egypt, and House of Traditional Arts and Nafisa Shams Academy in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. **George Richards**, Director of Strategy Development attended the MRP to better understand the process of helping Middle Eastern artisan access the export market.





Melanie Gaball, representative, [Lumber and Linen](#), West lake Village, CA works with Mexican and Indian women in the Los Angeles area who create beautiful detailed embroidery. “I would like to provide them with outdoor performance thread and fabric so they can create these handmade designs for my niche -outdoor design. “I would love to work with more local artists and abroad. I am most interested in bringing handmade products to the outdoor decor marketplace here in US.”



Ingrid Soza, Director at **Asesorias y Desarrollos S A**, Esteli, Nicaragua is a consultant to the artisan community. The artisans with whom she works produce products such as corn husk painting, pine baskets, stones sculpture, wood, recycle paper cards, and clay. Ingrid came to the MRP to become better informed “about how to create a successful market and products for sale and create a better profile of artisans in Nicaragua”.



Field Representative, [Aid to Artisans, Chiapas, Mexico](#): **Margarita Lopez Hernandez** is an artisan, a weaving and embroidery specialist whose is responsible for training and successfully guiding quality control for her group. The group produces wonderful pillows, scarves, throws and table linens. Maria’s interest was to develop new designs ideas and gain fresh inspiration during the MRP.



The daughter of artisans, **Maria del Pilar Altamirano**, left her job as a computer engineer to join her family to create an organization of artisans exporting directly. Clothing Line Manager, [Aptec Peru](#), **Lima, Peru**, Maria is deeply invested in working with artisans. “We are a group of 26 artisans-families that work different line of handicrafts and textiles. Basically the most important thing for us is to learn about the U.S. market; we want to know the type of B2B customers, how the end customers buy, how we can customize our products, trends, new business ways we could explore.”



Miguel Angel Hernandez Torres, a recent college graduate with a degree in foreign trade works with both national and international sales. With Miguel as a Marketing and Sales Coordinator, [Aid to Artisans Chiapas, Mexico](#) this particular young ATA project is already producing high quality weaving and embroidery products currently found in the U.S. retail market. During the MRP Miguel focused on broadening his knowledge of the craft sector and explore new market opportunities for these high quality artisan-made products.



Marissa Heyl, CEO, [Symbology Clothing](#), **Grapevine, Texas**, built Symbology as an ethical lifestyle brand that collaborates with artisan women in developing countries to create handcrafted fashion forward designs. “I want to learn more about the wholesale market scene for artisan home decor, and meet with experts to help me expand our distribution channels nationwide and internationally.”



Paz Schwencke, represented **Paz Schwencke, Coyhaique, Chile**: As an artist specializing in glazed copper, Paz's business focus is related to art, design and craftsmanship, in an effort to create representative products of Chilean Patagonia through textures, shades and forms of the nature of the Aysen region. She attended the MRP to "learn and know about the international market, new trends, interact with exhibitors and to show work that is produced in the "Chilean Patagonia" as well as explore export opportunities".



Rikki Quintana, owner of Bridge to the Great Silk Road dba [Hoon Arts](#), **New Mexico** is a newly retired lawyer, working with artisans in **Tajikistan**, Rikki founded this importing company, specializing in traditional artisan-made goods in textiles such a silk Ikat, as well as wood carving, ceramics and silver. Carefully growing the business, she works with up to 15 individual artisans or artisan workshops. She hopes to expand her business after getting the assessment and understanding the viability of her wares and create an opportunity to network with potential buyers.

Dokkan was born out of our passion and personal interest in making difference in people's lives. Working in Egyptian linen and cotton, each piece of their work tells a story, one enriched with a combination of contemporary and historic culture. **Soheir Ghali**, Co-Founder, [Dokkan Crafts](#), **Fairfield, VA** says "We are working with NGO's and local entrepreneurs in **Egypt** who want to develop their communities. We aim to sustainably empower impoverished artisans while appreciating the beauty of authentic Egyptian craftsmanship"





Silvia Toledo, represented **Quillango and Coyhaique, Chile**. **Quillango Crafts** prides itself on 100% handmade products created by means of using sheep and alpaca wool from their own farm in the Aysén Region (Chilean Patagonia). The process of production preserves techniques of spinning, dyeing and weaving on a hand crafted looms, embedding modern designs to produce exclusive garments. Silvia came to the MRP with a specific goal. “I hope to get the knowledge to improve production processes or techniques in products, that would meet the standards” of the US market.

Monica Perez Roulet, Owner, [MPRart](#), **Washington, D.C.** is originally from Argentina and holds a degree in graphic design. Her current business including graphic design involves fine art, working in paper, clay, glass and wood. She owned and operated a neon sign factory providing neon signs to beer and soda companies. This intense manual work also required skilled craftsmen and attention to high quality. She is currently interested in promoting Latin America crafts. Her interest in the MRP is to better understand sales, channels, import regulations, current market



Varnita Kohli, Freelance Designer, **Indigo Blossoms, McLean, VA** attended the MRP to assess the demand and viability for products made of recycled cloth. Varnita works with marginalized women groups in India to provide them with a source of income through sales of products from leftover scraps of cloth from organic vegetable-dyed textiles such as cotton, silk and voile. The left-over scraps are used to make vibrant gift bags and tote bags reflecting traditional Indian motifs and colors. “I aim to understand how to tap the international market successively and gain an in depth understanding of the US retail market including quality and design.”

Canvas Home Small Grants Bring Big Hope Across the Globe



The Llaguepulli Indigenous Community



[The Llaguepulli Indigenous Community \(TLIC\)](#) from **Chile** specializes in producing Artisanal wool textiles on the traditional Mapuche loom, integrating cultural symbols and murals creating blankets, throws, pillows, sweaters, bags, hats and gloves. They used the grant money to invest in an industrial size overlock sewing machine that has been a great asset to the organization in more ways than one.

It has enabled artisans to train themselves, many for the first time, on how to use an Industrial sewing machine to finish their products. By enabling them to add decorative and functional elements they were able to add value to their products enhancing the design aesthetic, durability and practicality in the process expanding on the conventional range of products.

As a result of the newly acquired overlock machine, Artisans have greater access to markets as now they are able to provide a diversity of apparel and decorative pieces. This has benefitted the artisans not just boosting sales in a short time, but also their self confidence in tapping into new markets. This has resulted in the expansion of goals and strategies to grow as an organization through new partnerships with other businesses.

Bahari Crafts



Maryam Mohamed owner and designer of [Bahari Crafts](#) believes she can improve the lives of women in **Tanzania**, through cooperative entrepreneurship and the equitable sharing of income. She used the grant money to enhance stitching skills that improved artisan's workmanship and helped them understand design. They now produce multipurpose home decor products tailored to US standard sizes. This asset has resulted in a boost in sales and helped generate extra work and income for the artisans. Furthermore, Maryam reinvests 50% of the sales income to buy flat hand woven cotton raw material to keep the production ongoing and integrating new designs to the traditional Tanzanian cloth. She now has a new brochure highlighting the new and improved craftsmanship and the innovative product line.

Child's Cup Full



[Child's Cup Full](#), a 2015 MRP Alumni, is a non-profit social enterprise aims to empower women artisans in the **West Bank** by sharing their talent and expertise through beautifully handcrafted educational children's toys and traditional Palestinian embroidered shoes, jewelry and accessories.

They decided to use grant money by investing in training artisans for skill building. They employed low income refugee women artisans and provided training to them in their artisan center of Zababdeh, a small village in the northern West Bank. This met with instant success, they were able to sign up for a variety of events in the U.S. to generate business, build their brand, promote products and increase sales. This gave them additional funds required to expand their artisan workforce by allowing them to employ more artisans to meet the demands of their growing orders.

With increased sales and profit, Child's Cup Full intends to invest the profit buying new sewing machines to enhance production with an aim to create lasting economic opportunities for them as well as their families and communities

Sidai Maasai



The grant allowed [Sidai Maasai Women's Organization](#), a **Tanzanian** group, to buy their own tools which improved the quality of production, which then helped increase sales and the number of people employed.

This helped improve the quality of production that was always an issue. This created a small increase in output, which resulted in an increase of income to artisans and allowed more employment opportunities. This had an enormous impact on their families such as improved nutrition; they now have more money for food, and improved education for their children.

The grant allowed workers to have their own tools which improved the quality of production, which then helped increase sales and the number of people employed.



Ixbalamk'e Cooperative



Ixbalamk'e Cooperative is a group of 40 women from an isolated part in the North of **Guatemala** who organized themselves with the aim to revive and preserve the Millennial Gauze weaving technique. By 1979 about 70 Indigenous families from the K'eqchi ethnic group who had fled land displacements, resettlements and persecution, finally procured a piece of land from the government where they now live, weave and cultivate coffee.

After receiving the small grant the looms were sent to be built in a town named, Nahuala in the high lands, in Guatemala. Three foot-looms have recently been completed and are ready to start serving the community. Training is currently underway as it hopes to empower artisans. This will provide a consistent source of income and improve their lives as well as enable them to establish a strong foothold of their cultural identity.

The permanent fixture of foot looms in their community will also provide an opportunity to teach a new generation of young women artisans traditional weaving techniques that can be preserved and passed on to future generations.

Y'Abal Handicrafts



In 2016, [Y'Abal](#) started a women's business training program in the remote communities of Pacutama and Chuicutama, in Santa Catarina **Ixtahuacan, Guatemala**. A weaving cooperative consists of women artisans who are trained twice a month in workshops related to how to start and manage a small home-based business. Women are taught new income-generating skills such as soap making, crochet, baking, and jelly making, in addition to, business skills such as price calculation, budgeting, and options for micro-finance.

The Canvas Home Grant facilitated Y'Abal to attend the Fair Trade Federation conference in Vermont and network, not only with storeowners and new customers, but also with other artisan groups that are doing similar work. Aside from increased business sales, they learned business and management skills by networking with other artisan groups and workshop sessions provided at the conference.





Thank You

In light of the devastating damage from Hurricane Matthew please support our artisans and partners in Haiti by

[donating here](#)

Aid to Artisans

