About AIACA

The All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (AIACA), established in 2004, is a membership based organization for the handloom and handicrafts sector in India. It aims to develop craft based enterprises and explore new and commercially sustainable models of livelihood generation. AIACA is supported by various government and international organizations.
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AIACA’s Projects and Programmes

AIACA engages in the following key activities:

- Policy advocacy;
- Craft-based entrepreneurship development;
- Interventions in innovative design, product development and product diversification;
- Capacity building of enterprises and crafts organizations on various aspects of business and production management; and
- Facilitation of direct access to markets.

These interventions are implemented through AIACA’s Craftmark and Enterprise Support Programme and five projects. The projects currently running are:

1. Going Green
2. Tribal Cluster Development Project
3. Dalit Artisan’s Empowerment Project
4. ‘Weaving a new story: Developing sustainable livelihoods model for poor weavers in Benares
5. Mubarakpur Weavers’ Livelihood Intervention Project
Going Green: Supported by European Union under its SWITCH-Asia Programme

The project aims to promote economic competitiveness and wellbeing of 6 selected artisan/weaver clusters of the Indian textile industry. The objective is to build sustainable businesses for textile artisans and improving their working conditions through efficient eco-friendly processes, access to resources and increased demand for ‘Green’ products. The project clusters are:

Rajasthan

- Block printers and weavers in Jaipur
- Kota Doriya Weaving in Kota
- Scrap fabric products in Udaipur
- Tie and Dye work in Churu

Uttar Pradesh

- Benaras weavers of Varanasi
- Chikankari embroiders of Lucknow
The focus of this project is on lowering the negative environmental impact of traditional craft processes and improving the health of the artisans and communities. In addition to adapting and promoting the technologies developed under SUSTEX project (first phase of Going Green), additional practices and technologies will be identified, demonstrated, and promoted, leading to strong sustainable production practices that can be adopted by SMEs and artisans. Such practices and technologies will include sourcing and using natural and organic fibers; natural dyeing, small-scale Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs), efficient fuel and water consumption, use of health and safety gears, and use of environmental friendly power such as solar or wind (production); and green finishing processes, recycling of waste fabric and upcycling of used products (finishing and post-production).
The key interventions of the Going Green project are:

- Organizing 250 SMEs and 12,500 artisans producing textile products into at least 150 artisan-based collectives.
- Developing 6 federations.
- Providing trainings for SMEs and advocating policy changes to encourage the uptake of eco-friendly practices in textile clusters.
- Creating collectives to empower artisans and SME.
- Identifying potential as well as existing schemes for finance and services to build efficient eco-friendly businesses.
## Project Clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N o.</th>
<th>Cluster/Name of the Partner NGO</th>
<th>Sub-cluster</th>
<th>Craft Practiced</th>
<th>Consolidated Activities Year 1</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Bassi</td>
<td>Handloom Weaving</td>
<td>2. Mobilization into formal structures like Collectives, SHJs, JLGs, CIGs, federations, SME’s etc.</td>
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<td>Bagru</td>
<td>Dabu Block Printing</td>
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<td>Ratangarh</td>
<td>Bandhani &amp; Shibori</td>
<td>6. Training of CRPs</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Lucknow- SEWA Lucknow</td>
<td>Quadam Rasool</td>
<td>Chikankari</td>
<td>7. Conducting consultations (cluster level &amp; state level) for identification of gaps in policies and related issues.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Basmandi</td>
<td>Chikankari</td>
<td>8. Providing access to resources to the beneficiaries, like artisan card, weaver card, bank accounts, handloom mark certification</td>
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<td>Para</td>
<td>Chikankari</td>
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<td>Garhi Kinora</td>
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<td>Madion</td>
<td>Chikankari</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Varanasi-HWA</td>
<td>Kotwa</td>
<td>Brocade and Banarasi Weaving</td>
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<td>Lohata</td>
<td>Brocade and Banarasi Weaving</td>
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<td>Ramnagar</td>
<td>Brocade and Banarasi Weaving</td>
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Project Activities in the Year 2014-15

1. Going Green – launch at Varanasi, UP

Organized by implementation Partner HWA – Varanasi, UP; 21st August 2014; 91 participants.

Departmental heads of various Government bodies participated in this meeting. Mr Tapan Sharma, Deputy Director – Weaver Service Centre (Gov), Mr Nitesh Dhawan, AD (Handloom); Mr Sushil Tiwari, DDM, NABARD; Mr Sameer Kumar Sai, LDM and Mr. Anil Singh, Senior Manager, Handloom Development Corporation, facilitated sessions and participated in direct interactions with the M/SMEs and Weavers, and responded to queries.

Results:

i. Government implementing bodies understood the bottlenecks and assured about better service delivery from them.

ii. Weaver Service Centre (Department of Textile) is preparing of a list of beneficiaries who will be recommended for access to credit to representatives of financial institutions.
2. **Consultation with various stakeholders and government officials on Handloom Mark**

*Organized by our implementation partner HWA in Varanasi, UP; 13th and 14th of December 2014; 170 participants.*

The consultation was a multi-stakeholder interactive meeting, engaging government departments on discussing the importance of Handloom Mark for individual weavers and SMEs. The meeting helped in spreading awareness about its use and benefits.

Results:

i. 54 weavers were assisted in filing applications for the Handloom mark. 10 applications were checked on site during the course of the meeting by officials.

ii. Remaining applications were to be reviewed later.

iii. Textile department agreed to have a periodic surveillance audit by a team of officials for genuine products and certifications.
3. Consultation workshop/meeting with SMEs- for Access to Schemes

(Organized by implementation partner HWA – Varanasi, UP); 27th December 2014; 57 participants.

Results:

i. M/SMES were oriented on the importance of the Handloom Mark. They were also explained the procedure of obtaining and using it. In addition to this, they were introduced to weaver identity card and its benefits.

ii. M/SMEs were oriented and informed about the various other existing government schemes and processes to access their rights and entitlements, such as market linkages, raw-material access, etc.

iii. It was further decided that regular camps would be organized at the village level with the help of handloom and textiles department.
4. **Cluster level consultation with multiple stakeholders and Government bodies - decision makers**

(Organized by implementation Partner HWA – Banaras, UP); 29th December 2014; 96 (73 Male & 23 Female) participants including SMEs/ Master Weavers/ Active volunteers, government dignitaries and community representatives.

Mr Rajan Bahal, Chairman, Banaras Vastra Udyog Sangh, Mr. P. Singh, Assistant Director, Textiles Committee, Mr. Nitesh Dhawan, Assistant Director, Handloom, Mr Anil Kumar Singh, Regional Manager, U.P. State Handloom Corporation Ltd, and Sardar Haji Ali Ahmad, Tanjeemi Pancha, were the key speakers at the event.

5. **Orientation Workshop for the SHG members**

(Organized by implementation Partner Vishwas Sansthan – Udaipur, Rajasthan); 18th December 2014; 150 participants including 40 SHG groups, Block Development Officer (BDO), Panchayat Samit, Salumber, CDPO, Women & Child Development Department (GoR)

Results:

i. BDO assured his support to the community members for adoption of environmental friendly processes (such as sanitation) and access to government schemes.

ii. The documents on Collective formation and sustenance, developed by the organization were distributed to the various SHGs during the event.
6. Workshop with SMEs (Chhipa Community) of the Sujangarh sub-cluster

(Organized by implementation Partner DISHA – Churu, Rajasthan); 8th December 2014; 53 M/SMEs Participated

The Workshop saw participation of SMEs, DIC, Churu and bank representatives from State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank.

Results:

i. The SMEs expressed their interest in aligning themselves with the Going Green mandate. They also wished to form association/collective to gain access to schemes/resources.

ii. A follow-up meeting was planned with the representative SME (identified from the audience).

iii. It was decided that Cluster based AC (Artisans Card) and ACC (Artisans Credit Cards) camps will be organized in partnership with the lead bank.
Other Important Activities

1. **State Level Consultation on MGNREGS and Craft livelihood (Uttar Pradesh): An Advocacy event to incorporate Craft (Handloom & Handicraft) under MGNREGS**

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, provides 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year (FY) to every rural household, whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

A State Level Policy Consultation at Lucknow was organized in association with two of its regional partners Human Welfare Association, Varanasi and Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) Lucknow on 16th March 2015. Shri. Ambika Choudhary, Minister, Backward and Handicapped Welfare (UP State Government) was the Chief Guest at the Consultation. He was handed over the Memorandum to include the recommendations discussed to be incorporated in the Draft State Handicraft Policy. The Consultation addressed three major issues, through its deliberations. These were:
• Inclusion of Cottage, Handicrafts and Handloom sector under the ambit of MGNREGA, under the skilled category and the ancillary workers in semi-skilled and unskilled category.

• One person of each household involved in handmade cottage industry, handloom and handicrafts industry should be provided 100 days job guarantee and wages equal to that of a skilled labor as guaranteed under the provisions of Minimum Wages Guarantee Act 1948. This provision was recommended to be incorporated in the forthcoming State Handicraft Policy.

• Provision of Unemployment Allowance as directed under various State Notifications to be applied to Cottage industries and the Handloom and Handicraft sector.

2. Design Development Workshop: Salumber, Udaipur

A three-day workshop on design development was conducted in Salumber, Udaipur from 22nd to 25th of March. More than 60 women artisans from 5 different panchayats were given hands-on training in making jewelry and hair accessories out of scrap fabric.

3. Financial Literacy & Governance Training

Financial Literacy & Governance training was conducted in all the six project clusters during 19th March to 9th April. The trainings imparted to CRPs (Community Resource Person) comprised of 11 modules, and was conducted over 2 days per cluster.
Going Green in Media

[Images of various newspapers articles]
Tribal Cluster Development Project: Supported by the RBS Foundation

The Tribal Cluster Development Project of AIACA is supported by the RBS Foundation India. It aims to build a targeted approach towards socio-economic sustainability, while preserving and enhancing tribal craft production.

AIACA has been locally engaging with appropriate partner organizations that understand the strengths and limitations of the community. It is also conducting necessary interventions to develop the cluster and train artisans in order to set up self-sustainable enterprises.

The interventions were planned based on a feasibility study conducted to assess the needs and gaps. The specific interventions aim to build and strengthen their existing value chains:

- Aggregate artisans into collectives,
- Develop the skill and capacity of artisans,
- Introduce new design techniques for improving production and market outreach,
- Train the cluster on entrepreneurial and business functions to make them self-reliant,
- Establish market linkages,

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Producer Group</th>
<th>Interventions in FY 2014-2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>Common interventions</td>
<td>• Assessment of the business plans to gauge performance and new targets&lt;br&gt;• Charting of the marketing calendar – Identification and planning for the month-wise events for marketing and promotion&lt;br&gt;• Market linkages through fairs and exhibitions and procuring orders for the groups&lt;br&gt;• Initiation of MIS development&lt;br&gt;• Participation in Fairs and Exhibitions&lt;br&gt;• Tools and machinery for infrastructure development</td>
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<tr>
<td>all clusters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shalom (150 artisans)</td>
<td>• Retailing and buyer enquiries&lt;br&gt;• Tools and machinery for infrastructure development&lt;br&gt;• Design workshop and sampling completion&lt;br&gt;• Tools and machinery planning for infrastructure development&lt;br&gt;• Recruitment of marketing executive at Shalom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porgai (70 artisans)</td>
<td>• Design placement training for artisans to achieve production consistency&lt;br&gt;• Skill development of tailors&lt;br&gt;• Skill development training for artisans to achieve production consistency&lt;br&gt;• Design training on the new tools established</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uravu (150 artisans)</td>
<td>• Product development workshop planning&lt;br&gt;• Fundraising guidance (hands-on training)&lt;br&gt;• Resource restructuring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Build the vendor pool and create a knowledge database for tracking performance and identify new potential areas.

Project Activities in the Year 2014-15

Following two successful years of direct intervention and training of the clusters, the third year of 2014-15 was aimed at gradual handover of the built processes and providing strategic directions to the clusters, in order to make them capable of expanding their operational horizons. The third year focused on promoting opportunities for producer groups to become self-reliant. Key activities for the third year were:

• Assessed business plans to gauge performance and targets. We also charted out a marketing calendar for promotion of group products through E-commerce, retail and exhibitions.
• MIS system was developed with all the groups.
• New tools and machinery were procured for Shalom.
• Design training was conducted by AIACA for the artisans to achieve production consistency.
• Additional skill development was initiated for tailoring to produce finished products.
• Uravu was guided through the fundraising process, through hands-on training.
• Marketing executives were recruited and trained for the local partners to manage marketing activities of the artisan groups.
• Social media pages on Google+ and Facebook were created for the 3 clusters, to encourage outreach.
• All three clusters participated in 8 exhibitions in Chennai, Bangalore, Trivandrum, Cochin and Ooty.
• Resource planning and allocation for the three clusters were conducted.
• The groups were supported with their retailing and buyer enquiries.
• Market linkages through fairs and exhibitions and procuring orders for the groups and online marketing tie-ups with e-retailers for expanded outreach.
• The business plans were revisited to track the progress.
• Annual project impact assessment was carried for strategizing the way forward.
Dalit Artisans Empowerment Project: Supported by Tikau Share Ry

The project aims at socio-economic empowerment of the Dalit community of Haldipada (Odisha) by building and strengthening existing skills and capacities of the artisans, introduction of new design techniques for expanding production efficiency and outreach and training the community on entrepreneurial and business function.

The objectives of the ‘Dalit Artisans’ Empowerment Project in Haldipada’ are:

- Improving the basic vocational skills of artisans and enabling them to prepare an increasing number of good quality products for local and international markets.
- Developing entrepreneurial skills of the artisans and youth from the community members to capacitate them to plan and do business.

Project Activities in the Year 2014-15

1. Activity Planning

Based on learnings from the field assessment, a detailed activity plan was charted out in consultation with Tikau Share, a NGO from Finland supporting this project. The action plan provided an outline of the activities that need to be conducted, the best time period to conduct the trainings (keeping in mind the socio-environmental conditions at the field level) and the financial budget for the listed exercises. The action plan also factored in
the feedback from the markets on product expectations and outreach segments.

2. Self-help Group Formation

The artisans of Haldipada are extremely backward, and had to be continuously motivated to form SHG. Despite this challenge, 8 SHGs were formed during May -July 2014.

3. SHG management trainings were conducted with these groups.
Topics covered during the training were:
- Role of SHGs and members
- Benefits and importance of working as a group
- Benefits of saving
- Benefits of maintaining bank accounts etc.

4. SHG Bank account opening and saving & transaction habit development
Appropriate financial activity is mandatory for all organization to climb the ladder of success. Very few community members in Haldipara had bank accounts. Most of the community members did not have any experience of dealing with banking facilities. It was necessary to develop healthy banking habits amongst the community, so that in future they can run their business successfully. Keeping this in mind we helped open bank account for the eight SHGs. In this regard the local coordinator Mr. Rakes Patra conducted 3 meetings with the community.
5. Training for RAWHAA

AIACA conducted a session on Capacity Building with RAWHAA, the local partner. Various methods and techniques of project management, time management, project monitoring and market planning were addressed in this training.

6. Product and design development training

A designer from NID and an international designer trained artisans on various dyeing techniques. It was attended by 82 artisans.

7. Literacy and Numeracy training

Very few members of the community know how to read and write. To increase literacy rates amongst the community we started the literacy and numeracy training in October. We took permission from the local school in the village to conduct the training in the school.
Weaving a new story: Developing Sustainable Livelihood Model for poor weavers in Banaras: Supported by Traidcraft & DFID-PACS

Located in three clusters of Lohata, Kotwa and Ramnagar this project aims to reduce poverty of 5000 weaver households in Varanasi, through forming/strengthening weaver collectives and providing skills and handholding support to tap markets in a sustainable way. It will give weavers access to sustainable income earning opportunities by equipping them with the technical, organizational, negotiating, and networking skills.

The aim of the project is to reduce the fragmented nature of the weavers’ operations; lessen their dependency on the master weaver or the middlemen;
changing the value chain equation in favor of the weavers; protect and secure the need of the vulnerable and marginalized Banarasi weavers in ensuring higher income by strengthening them with greater bargaining power and increased business skills.

Project Activities in the Year 2014-15

1. **Baseline Survey**

Baseline Survey -- 500 households were surveyed as part of the baseline survey. Several Focus Group Discussions were conducted and ten case studies of weavers, allied professionals and weaver associations were conducted.

The Report confirms the the significance of project in terms of the needs of the beneficiaries, such as the support required for marketing and product development, importance of collectives and holistic development in terms of addressing access to resources for health and social security as well as engagement with the government. The report also brings out the poor living standards of the weaving community in the region and the deplorable status of women in terms of their social status and participation in economic activity.
2. Training and Cascading on Governance and Access to Resources

Training on Governance and Access to Resources was organized at the Common Facility Center (CFC), Kotwa in the month of August 2014. 61 identified leaders from Ramnagar, Lohta and Kotwa were trained. The training was designed with a view to equip artisans to set up and strengthen strong governance systems, group planning and methods of participatory and transparent decision making. The training enabled them to understand various steps in accessing government schemes and financial resources.

Each trained leader then identified another 10 leaders to pass on the knowledge through cascading mode. 1023 beneficiaries were trained through this activity in all the three clusters. The purpose of the activity was to strengthen artisan based collectives.
3. Capacity Building on running viable businesses

3.1. Capacity Building on Business Skills

The Business Skill Development Training was held on 25-26 February 2015 at Hotel City Inn, Varanasi. The training was attended by 30 selected small to medium sized master weavers from the Kotwa cluster of the project.

Primarily, the overall aim of the training was to:

- Orient weavers on market needs, product - pricing, promotion, production and quality standards in their handloom enterprise.
- Introduce and establish the need and importance of development of a business facilitation unit.
- The training was designed on the principles of adult learning and specifically used participatory tools and methods. Key topics covered over the two day training programme were:
  a) Understanding of business framework.
  b) Production planning, costing and pricing of the products.
  c) Quality standards specifically Craftmark.
d) Marketing especially new age marketing tools such as ecommerce and uses of social media for enterprise/product promotion.

- Consultation on setting up a social enterprise/Business facilitation Unit was conducted with the beneficiaries.

### 3.2. Establishment of a Business Facilitation unit

**Feasibility Study:**

A study by an external consultant was carried out to assess the feasibility of setting up a Business Facilitation Unit in Benaras city.

The study suggested setting-up a Business Facilitation Unit as a business entity to sustain the efforts, after the life of the project (or other local businesses). It is important that artisans/weavers continue to have access to services that enable them to function efficiently and continue to be connected to the market. The Business Facilitation Unit will function as a one-stop shop to serve the business service needs of the weaver producers (and ultimately other kinds of handloom enterprises in the area). This will include information, ongoing market, information for linking up to public & private service providers and resources for running a successful enterprise.

**Consultation Meetings for Setting-up of BFU:**

Several consultation meetings were conducted in Varanasi with multiple stakeholders and project beneficiaries to discuss the needs and services of the business facilitation unit. It was decided that the focus should be on small weavers initially, by providing capacity building support and
market linkages. Economic change in the life of these small weavers will inspire others to connect with the BFU. Master weavers need new designs to increase profit. This may in turn lead to increase in the daily wages of small weavers. This needs ethics and interest of master weaver. Ethical practices as a set of standard should be promoted so that the small weavers get appropriate daily wage and some profit benefits from the master weavers.

4. Developing new product lines

Five master weavers from Kotwa, Lohta and Ramnagar cluster of Benaras were identified to participate in the new product line development workshops. These workshops will aim to develop high end products that command a premium price in the market. It would be an endeavour to diversify the ‘benarasi’ products in order to attract consumers. The handcrafted processes will be certified and awarded the ‘Craftmark’ label.

To facilitate the process of new product lines, AIACA has contracted a trained designer to work on the product designs and develop 25-30 designs for the
workshops. Eventually a total of 100 weavers will be engaged in the new product line development workshop.
Mubarakpur Weavers Livelihood Intervention: Supported by Sheikh Jaffer and Nematullah Ebrahim Family Foundation Limited

Mubarakpur Weavers Livelihood Intervention project was started in November 2014 with the identification of 10 weavers initially, expanding to 50 within the project life of 3 years. The aim of the project is to improve the livelihood of Bohra Muslim weavers in Mubarakpur by developing artisan-based Co-operative or Producer Company.

The Bohra weavers of Mubarakpur are predominantly wage earners. Some of them are businessmen who are engaged in trading of sarees in the region. The history of the Mubarakpur cluster shows the rise and fall of its product market. Even the product base has changed from time to time, as per demands of traders or buyer. They produce Silk and high-end heavy Zari Sarees to Art Silk (Synthetic) Sarees. Today more than 93% of the production is art silk sarees. Though the profit margin is meager in such sarees it has a better demand compared to Silk Sarees. The active weaver force has been
reduced drastically, as some of the weavers have opted for other professions. The weavers have started working as job workers for traders, at very low wages like Rs. 75/- to Rs. 130/- per day for weaving a saree that takes about 2.5 days to complete (a 5.5 meter fabric weaving) on handloom. These wages are too low for the weavers of Mubarakpur, to make ends meet. On a power loom, two sarees can be made in a day and the wages are less than Rs. 100 a day. On the efficiency equation, handloom employs at least 2 weavers whereas one weaver can operate two power looms simultaneously. On an average, the number of working days is not more than 250 days per year given the intense heat in the summer, cold in the winter and festival breaks. Large traders and manufacturers operating from Banaras mainly control the cluster. They sell Mubarakpur weaves as Banarasi sarees. This has led to significant brand dilution of Mubarakpur weave and as a result, the Bohra community artisans have lost their own identity. Through this project AIACA wishes to restore the status of the Mubarakpur style of weaving in the handwoven textile market and develop it as a brand.
Objective:

- Creating an artisan-based Co-operative or Producer Company that would be owned and managed by the weavers.
- Ensuring sufficient market linkages to provide year-round gainful employment to the weavers in the Co-operative
- Setting in place strong governance structure to prevent monopoly of the entity by a few
- Building a corpus to support self-sufficiency of the cluster so as to eliminate dependence on exploitative stake-holders and buffer against market risks
- Greater involvement of women in the decision-making process

Year 1 focus was to develop strong governance structure by developing rules regulations and by-laws to institutionalize the weavers into a SHG. Organizing regular meeting, financial trainings and exposure visits were some of the initiatives which were taken for developing awareness and market exposure for weavers along with design development and proper market linkage.
1. Exposure Visit:

Two weavers- Mohd. Abuzar and Mohd. Masood from Bhurani Swayam Sewa Samuh (SHG formed) in Mubarakpur had visited New Delhi for a three day exposure visit.

The objective of the visit was to show the weavers (who have only been interacting with master weavers till now) shops that sell handloom products and interact with craft based social enterprises that have been working on promoting artisans and their work. The visit was planned in a way that weavers can see various exhibitions happening in the city where artisans from all over the country participate and sell their products.

2. SHG Meeting to develop laws and by- laws:

Development of good governance by developing proper rules and regulation for SHG was initiated through workshops and trainings. All the decisions related to payment, productions, market planning and financial management were taken at the meeting and were formalized into a resolution for avoiding
any conflict. Thus a proper conflict management system was developed which helps them in running their business enterprises.

3. Financial Training and importance of SHG:

Training programmes were organized for the weavers to inform them about the importance of SHGs and its management. An initial level of financial literacy training was delivered to the weavers, elaborating on the importance of book keeping, importance for regular meetings to discuss all the issues related to the financial accounting.

4. Social Media & Website details

Facebook account was started with the name “Mubarakpur Weaves” and weavers can be reached directly at “mubarakpur.weaves@gmail.com”
Craftmark & Enterprise Support Programme: Supported by Ford Foundation

The Craftmark is a certification programme designed and managed by AIACA, that certifies genuine Indian handmade craft products produced in a socially responsible manner, develops sector-wide minimum standards and norms for labelling a product as a handicraft product and increases consumer awareness of distinct handicraft traditions and strengthens the supply chain from manufacturer to end consumer.

The Craftmark Certification programme is the only national certification in India on handmade craft processes which not only promotes authentic handmade processes but also encourages innovation in design and application keeping the authentic handmade process intact. Craftmark is linked to several buyers in the domestic and international market including
ecommerce platforms. It enables its members to access these markets and take advantage of the economic opportunities with improved competitiveness.

The Craftmark initiative is unique in bringing together skilled craft producers, NGOs, private producers, and cooperatives under a common umbrella. Craftmark has been successful in developing a brand identity for Indian handmade crafts as a whole thus promoting a common brand for thousands of artisans.

Under this initiative, based on thorough verification, AIACA licenses the use of Craftmark logo by crafts producers, craft-based businesses, cooperatives and NGOs to establish the authenticity of their hand made products.

Currently there are more than 80+ active Craftmark member organizations within the AIACA network who have benefitted through design innovation, technology use, market support and enterprise development. Some of the Craftmark members include Fab India, Sandur Kushal Kala Kendra, Sadhna-Sewa Mandir, Eco Tasar, Ochre Ceramics, Shrujan, Dastkar Ranthambore and Aavaran.

As part of its Certification process AIACA also documents authentic craft processes to create a knowledge bank accessible to all. Craftmark has more than 88 craft processes documented.
Project Activities of the Year 2014-15

Activities of the Enterprise Support Programme

1. **Craftmark Jury, April 2014**

Craftmark Market Access Jury was held in April 2014 wherein products of new Craftmark members were assessed on various market-related parameters by a panel of senior industry experts such as Laila Tayabji (Founder and Head of Dastakar), Sangeeta Sen (Director Mela Artisans and former Head- Design Fab India), Hema Shroff (Founder Amba), Saleem Beg (convener Intach J&K and former Tourism Director J&K). Based on their recommendations, AIACA conducted the ground-level training programs under its Enterprise Support Program so as to provide further assistance in the areas identified.

Apart from the Jury session, there were several workshops for the Jury participants such as workshop on CSR Funding with Ms. Dhruvi Shah (CSR Head, Royal Bank of Scotland), workshop on woolmark with Mr. Anjan Sanyal (product and Licensing Manager, Woolmark India), Workshop on Public sector funding with representative of Bharatiya Mahila Bank,
workshop on New Funding Avenues with Ms. Sowmya Nandan, (Chief Impact Officer, Rang De), workshop on E-commerce for craft sector by representative of Jaypore. All the participant members were also allotted stalls in Delhi Haat for 2 days so that they can sell their products.


2. Vitt Shaala

Vitt Shala is another programme of Craftmark which serves as a regular platform for bringing together key stakeholders in the craft sector to support small craft producers with marketing and financial management skills and information. Craftmark organized Vitt Shaala (Finance workshop) on 4th and 5th September 2014. Vitt Shaala was organized in the month of September keeping the financial management challenges that Craftmark members face in their businesses. Vitt
Shaala started with a session on Costing and Pricing which was delivered by Ms. Arushi Chowdhury Khanna (ESP Manager, Craftmark). The second session on first day was based on Organisation structure which was taken by Mr. Parvinder Pal (organization consultant). The last session of the day was on marketing which was guided by Saloni Malhotra (consultant).

The second day started with an introduction to government handicraft schemes by Mr. Navraj Goyal (Additional Development Commissioner). The next session by Sarla Yadav (Finance Manager) guided Craftmark members on how to get the import export code which was a major interest area for the members. Sonica Kapoor (Designer) gave her inputs on production planning by giving examples based on her own experiences. The last session was by the Ebay team. They introduced Craftmark to Ebay’s working structure so that the producer groups can sell their products through Ebay and even conveniently export them. In the end, Vitt Shaala assignment books were circulated, which included assignments on each session to be checked by the respective teachers in the follow up session i.e. Vitt Shaala part 2.

A total of 11 groups participated in Vitt Shaala- Mrs. Fiona Wright from Kayef Stitching, Ms. Amrita Choudhary from Disha Shekhawati, Mrs. Geetika Kakkar from Gauri International, Mr. Praveen from Sandur, Mrs. Manjula from Sadhna, Mr. Rahimol from Aagorweaves, Mrs. Anuja from Rupalee, Mr. Vikram from Grameen Vikas Sansthan, Mr. Pramod from Touchy Export, Mr. Nawab from Shalom and Mr. Liyakath from Rose Coconut Shell.
3. Languishing Crafts of Northern India Discussion meeting

Craftmark organized a meeting at Khoj Foundation on Languishing Crafts of Northern India. Different types of Languishing crafts such as Ganjifa, Quitabat, Zardozi, Khes-making, Nala, Paranda making, Kullu Doll making and Chamba Rumal were discussed. The discussions were carried out by the Craftmark team and guest attendees - Himanshu Verma (Founder of Red Earth Festival), Ishan Khosla (founder of Ishan Khosla designs), Kalyani Kunche, (Design head-Triburg), Sangeeta Sen (Director Mela Artisans and former Head- Design Fab India), Ritu Sethi (Head Craft Revival Trust), Saleem Beg (Convenor Intach J&K and former Tourism Director J&K), Aditi Prakash (Founder of Pure Ghee Designs) and Anjali Bhatnagar (Designer).

4. Exposure Visit

An exposure visit for our new group-Kayef stitching was planned in the month of August so that they could learn how to handle business in a more efficient manner. The group Kayef stitching was linked to Shrujan and Kalaraksha from Bhuj, Gujarat which are doing very well in the craft sector. They got to know how the craft sector actually works, how bulk orders could
be carried out in a more efficient manner and other aspects such as production, finishing, account management.

5. **Product and Design Development workshops**

AIACA facilitated and coordinated design development workshops with existing and new Craftmark groups. Designers with extensive experience in the craft sector as well as in international market trends were hired to provide onsite design intervention.

- Abshar Hussain introduced a range of kitchenware and candle holders with the help of design development workshop with Craftmark; these products were then featured in the Catalogue 2014. The products were well received and orders and queries were processed.

- Sadhna worked on a new range of silhouettes and embroidery with the help of design development workshop with Craftmark; the final collection of this range will be launched soon.

- Gramin Vikas Chetana Sansthan underwent design intervention and sample development workshop under Craftmark programme in order to create a range of products that they can market through craft fairs and exhibitions across the country, through Diwali corporate gifting as well as through export channels.

- Incredible Kashmiri Crafts underwent design and product development workshop. A wide variety of cushion covers and bags were created with the design consultant hired by AIACA, the products were then featured in the catalogue 2014.
• Beer Singh underwent design and product development workshop in which the designer with the help of Beer Singh’s skills designed Kitchenware products.

6. **Craftmark Jury, January 2015**

   The next Craftmark Market Access Jury took place on 29th January, 2015 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. In the Jury products of 10 Craftmark members were evaluated by the Jury panel - Ms. Kalyani Kunche from Triburg, Ms. Shilpa Sharma from Jaypore.com and Mr. Saleem Beg from Intach J & K. The Craftmark members who came for the Jury included Arvind Exim, Kalavilasa, Mother Home, Mansi, Avani, Disha Shekhawati, Bunkaari India and Eco Tasar.

7. **Vitt Shaala 2 (Follow up workshop)**

   Craftmark’s Vitt Shaala 2 took place on 29th and 30th January, 2015 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The two day workshop included sessions on Communication and Life skills, Visual Merchandising, Marketing, Financial Management, Organization structure, Production
Planning and Branding. Craftmark members who attended this workshop included Gauri International, Disha Shekhawati, Grameen Vikas Evam Chetana Sansthan, Touchy Export and Rose Coconut Shell.

Marketing Activities by Craftmark

1. **Red Earth Saree Festival**
   The Red Earth Saree Festival took place in May 2014, at Alliance Francaise, New Delhi. Products from various Craftmark groups such as Saree and Dupatta from Shyla and Dwaraka, wooden products from Beer Singh, Jewelry from Anwesha, Saree from Miri and Bags from Kalaraksha were showcased in the Festival.

2. **Indian Handicrafts and Gift Fair (IHGF)**
   IHGF took place in February 2014, at Greater Noida. Products from various Craftmark groups such as baskets from Kadam Haat, kids item from Dastkar Ranthambore, wooden products from Abshar Hussain, cushion covers from Intach, Porgai, Shrujan, Gramshree and Aavaran, home décor items from Aavaran, Dining tableware from Viniyog, wall hanging, fruit basket, card holder, pen holder, jewelry box from Dwaraka were showcased. A big order was received for the mugs of Craftmark member-Hao Craft from an international buyer.

3. **Artisan Cottage, Ahmedabad**
Products from various Craftmark members such as wooden products from Abshar Hussain, Décor items from Coppre, Saree from Dhanopia, Dupatta and wallet from Dwaraka, Cushion cover from Intach, soap from Neev herbal, Lacquer toy from Varnam were showcased in the month of February 2014.

4. **Ants Store Bangalore**
Products from various Craftmark members such as wooden products from Beer Singh, garments and home décor products from Sadhna, Dupattas and saree from Disha Shekhawati, Jackets and scarfs from Kayef stitching, garments from Aavaran, saree from Shyla, wooden products from Abshar Hussain, cushion and pillow covers from Intach, home décor products from Dastakar Ranthambore, Jewelry from Rose Coconut Shell were showcased in the month of June.

5. **Red Earth I’m Too sexy Festival**
The Red Earth Festival took place in December 2014, at Alliance Francaise, New Delhi. Jackets and Pashmina shawls from Craftmark members - Kayef stitching and Blossoms of Heaven were showcased respectively.

6. **Concern India, Chennai**
Products from various Craftmark members such as garments from Porgai, saree from Shyla, Dhanopia and Rangasutra were showcased in January.
Other Marketing Activities for Craftmark members in the year 2014-15

1. Craftmark Website and web outreach
Craftmark has expanded its outreach and linkage with buyers through Facebook. In addition to this, the new website, www.craftmark.org was designed and launched. The website is a useful resource for interested buyers, consumers and academicians. They would have access to latest products, catalogues, craft documentations, membership details, and benefits of Craftmark and consumer awareness content.

2. Craftmark produced the following commercial Product Catalogues for market linkage

Annual Catalogue 2014 - The products of 18 Craftmark members were showcased in the Craftmark catalogue 2014. The product range included cushion covers, pillow covers, bed covers, Quilts, ceramic wind chimes, bags, wooden tableware, Decorative products, Toys, Baby pillow, danglers and baby bed linen.
Corporate catalogue - The products of 8 Craftmark members were showcased in the Corporate catalogue. The product range included copper décor items, ceramic platters, ceramic table accessories, wooden T lights, Channapatna box, wall art items, black pottery mugs, bar accessories and Dhokra table accessories. The total sales amounted to Rs. 79,189.

3. E-commerce linkages
Craftmark producer groups have been linked to existing e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and products are selling on this platform. For the first time Craftmark producer groups have a special store- called the ‘Artisan’s Corner’ on Amazon.in, giving them visibility on one of the top ecommerce portals. Currently, 12-14 producer groups have been linked to Amazon.in. Producer groups stand to gain immensely in terms of exposure and sales as a result of the heavy traffic these portals receive. The groups get access to customers from across the country at one go.
Governing Body

1. **Ms. Rathi Vinay Jha: President**

Mrs. Jha retired as the Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in 2004. Prior to that she has held many positions related to the crafts sector. She was also one of founders of NIFT and served as its Executive Director from 1987-93. She was also the Managing Director - Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation and CMD - COOPTEX from 1985-87.

After serving the Govt., she was Secretary General of the World Travel and Tourism Council India; Director General of the Fashion Design Council of India; Member of NIFT Board of Governors; Chairman of the Durgabai Deshmukh College for Visually Impaired. Currently, in addition to being the President of AIACA Governing Body, she is the Chairperson of Indian Heritage Cities Network ( IHCN ), Member of the Board of Governors of Indian Foundation for Arts ( IFA ), Madras Craft Foundation ( MCF ), Plan India, Sasakawa Foundation, The Coorg Foundation, C to K Foundation (craft sector in J&K ), and Indian Institute of Craft & Design ( IICD ).

2. **Mr. William Bissell: Vice President - Managing Director, FabIndia**

Mr. Bissell has overseen FabIndia's expansion into a leading crafts retail chain with more than 60 stores across the country. Prior to joining
FabIndia he founded and was the Managing Director of Desert Artisans - a cooperative of craftspeople based in Jodhpur - from 1990-99. He also started the Bhadrajun Artisan Trust, which runs schools in the Jodhpur district of Rajasthan.

3. **Madhura Dutta: Secretary** - Executive Director of AIACA

Madhura, a development sector specialist with more than thirteen years of experience has extensively worked with international and national organizations, particularly in the area of culture and development. She holds Masters Degrees in Sociology and Sustainable Development.

4. **Mr. Adarsh Kumar: Treasurer** - Founder of AIACA

Adarsh Kumar is a post-graduate from Harvard University. His has previously worked in the Ford Foundation and Urmul Marusthali Bunkar Vikas Samiti (UMBVS), a handloom weaver’s society located in Phalodi, Rajasthan. Adarsh has also been a founder member of AIACA and served as its Executive Director for 6 years. Currently he is with the World Bank.
Members

5. Ms. Roopa Mehta

Roopa Mehta is the CEO of Sasha Association for Craft Producers ("Sasha") and the Secretary of Sarba Shanti Ayog (SSA) its associate development organisation. Sasha/SSA provides business support inputs and market access for sustainable livelihoods to artisan groups based largely in rural communities and semi urban areas. She is on the Board of Sadhna, the handicrafts and income augmentation programme of Seva Mandir, Udaipur and the Managing Trustee of Ruro Agro Services Association, a registered trust which develops natural agro based products, trains producers and identify suitable markets. She is also on the Board of COMMACT International and World Fair Trade Organization.(WFTO).

Roopa Mehta is an MBA from Delhi University with further professional qualifications in Social Communication. In the earlier part of her professional career, Mrs. Mehta worked in hospitality and merchandising sector and she was the Chief Executive Officer of a renowned textiles manufacturing & retailing company before joining Sasha.

6. Mr. VK Madhavan

VK Madhavan had commenced volunteering in University during his Bachelor's degree. After a Master's and faced with the prospect of embarking on a PhD, he decided to defer admission, take a year off and go and live in a village. In 1991, VK Madhavan moved to Bikaner District of
Western Rajasthan to work with the Urmul Trust. He was hooked and stayed on till 1998. He is also a Trustee of The Ant - an organisation that works with Bodo tribals in Assam and The Ants Craft Trust, Bengaluru that runs a craft shop for produce primarily from the North-Eastern states of India.

7. Mr. Vipin Sharma

Vipin is the CEO of ACCESS, set up to promote the organized growth of microfinance and to support sustainable livelihoods options for the poor in India. Vipin started his career in 1980 with the RBI, from where he moved to NABARD in 1983. In 1996, he was seconded to the Government of Rajasthan as Executive Director to set up the first of its kind "Rural Non Farm Development Agency". In 2000 Vipin joined CARE India as Programme Director, heading the Microfinance programmes in the region. In 2006, ACCESS was spun out of CARE, which Vipin set up. He is also the Chief Advisor to ACCESS ASSIST, a new affiliate set up by ACCESS. Vipin has a Masters Degree from Delhi University and has attended several programmes at Cranfield Institute of Management, UK; Boulder University, USA and School of Management, Yale University USA.

8. Ms. Vibha Pingle

Vibha Pingle is President and Founder of Ubuntu at Work. Ubuntu at Work evolved out of her research on women micro entrepreneurs in South
Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, India, Indonesia and Nepal. Her research examined why only a few women micro entrepreneurs are able to develop their businesses, while most remain survivalist businesses. After completing her Ph.D. in sociology at Brown University, Vibha lectured in social studies at Harvard University, was a visiting professor at Brown University, an assistant professor at Rutgers, and a fellow at the Institute of Development Studies. She has been a consultant to the World Bank, DFID, the Aga Khan Foundation, UNDP, and Fidelity Investments. Her publications include: Rethinking the Developmental State: India’s Industry in Comparative Perspective (St. Martin’s Press, NY, 1999), Identity Landscapes, Social Capital, and Entrepreneurship: Small Business in South Africa.

9. Mr. Madhukar Khera

Mr. Madhukar Khera is the CEO of Bharat Carpet Manufacturers, one of the leading manufacturers of carpets in India.

10. Mr. Ramireddy Chandra Mowleswar Reddy (R.C.M Reddy)

Mr. RCM Reddy is the Managing Director of IL&FS Education & Technology Services Ltd. and IL&FS Skill Development Corporation and director in IL&FS Cluster Development Initiative Ltd. These companies are promoted by Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Ltd. (IL&FS), the leading infrastructure and financing company of India.
Mr. Reddy, in the capacity of MD & director of these companies, is responsible for all social sector initiatives of IL&FS Group in the areas of education, skill development, e-governance, health and cluster development. He has designed and implemented several path-breaking initiatives in partnership with the government and industry in the areas of SME cluster development and skill development with focus on youth below poverty line.

11. Ms. Neelam Chhiber

Neelam Chhiber, co-founder of Mother Earth/ Industree, is an Industrial Designer from National Institute of Design, India, an alumnus of Social Impact International, Global Social Benefit Incubator, Santa Clara University, USA and the Harvard Executive Programme. She is recipient of the Social Entrepreneur of the Year award, from the Schwab Foundation, World Economic Forum 2011. Neelam is building a blended capital eco system, which is composed of a private ltd. co. Industree Crafts Pvt Ltd. which creates market access, via brand Mother Earth, in Indian and global markets with investors- Future Lifestyle and Fashion, and Grassroots Business Fund, Washington. Neelam believes that design thinking leads to multiple stakeholder, solution based thinking, ideally suited to triple bottom line enterprise development.