



Aid to Artisans

Fall edition 2015

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2015 Canvas Home™ Small Grants Program Awardees

ATA is proud to announce the 2015 Canvas Home™ Small Grants Program awardees. This year, the program sponsored 6 artisan groups from Guatemala, Chile, the West Bank, and Tanzania.

Child's Cup Full



[Child's Cup Full](#) (CCF) is a 501(c)3 non-profit social enterprise with a mission to leverage the talent and expertise of women artisans in the West Bank to create beautifully handcrafted educational children's toys and other handmade products. CCF created its first artisan center in 2011 in Zababdeh to train and employ low-income, refugee women artisans to make handmade eco-friendly children's toys. Their long-term goal is to generate enough funds from sales to build a consortium of artisan centers throughout the West Bank as well as to support grassroots education programs for refugee children. With the small grant, CCF intends to develop new branding and marketing materials for their product collection as well as developing their advertising on social media and their e-newsletter.

Bahari Deco Crafts



[Bahari Deco Crafts](#) (BDC), founded by Mariam Katongo Mohamed is a micro-enterprise founded on the idea of making products that share the rich cultural fabrics and traditions from the Swahili culture, thus creating bridges that help build trade relations with artisans in Tanzania and the U.S.

BDC started operating in July 2011 by using Kanga to make Kitenge skirts, as well as bags and other variety of Tanzanian handicrafts at Fenton Street Market, in Silver Spring, MD. Mariam, who participated in the [Market Readiness Program™](#) in August 2015, currently collaborates with four Tanzanian groups that each specializes in the production of specific products that she is aiming to exhibit at [NYNOW™](#). With the small grant, BDC intends to purchase more raw-materials, such as Kangas, to increase her productivity. 20 people in Tanzania will participate in the production of 170 items. They will benefit directly from the sales of the products, which will allow them to cover various needs, such as school fees for their children, home improvement projects, and health care expenses.



[Y'Abal Handicrafts](#) is composed by several cooperatives of women in Guatemala. The organization was founded in 2005 to provide emergency disaster relief to two coastal indigenous communities, Pacutama and Chuicutama, which were displaced by Hurricane Stan and had to relocate in the highlands, a hostile environment for farming. Y'Abal started by providing them with essential goods before helping them to form a textile cooperative business to ensure the community's economic stability. Since then, the organization grew to become a Fair-Trade business that now works with 65 indigenous women artisans in two cooperatives. With the small grant, Y'Abal intends to participate in the [Fair Trade Federation Exposition](#). This will further develop their business and increase their sales, in order to even better support the artisan cooperatives they work with. Their next goal is to export their Fair Trade products to the European and American markets.

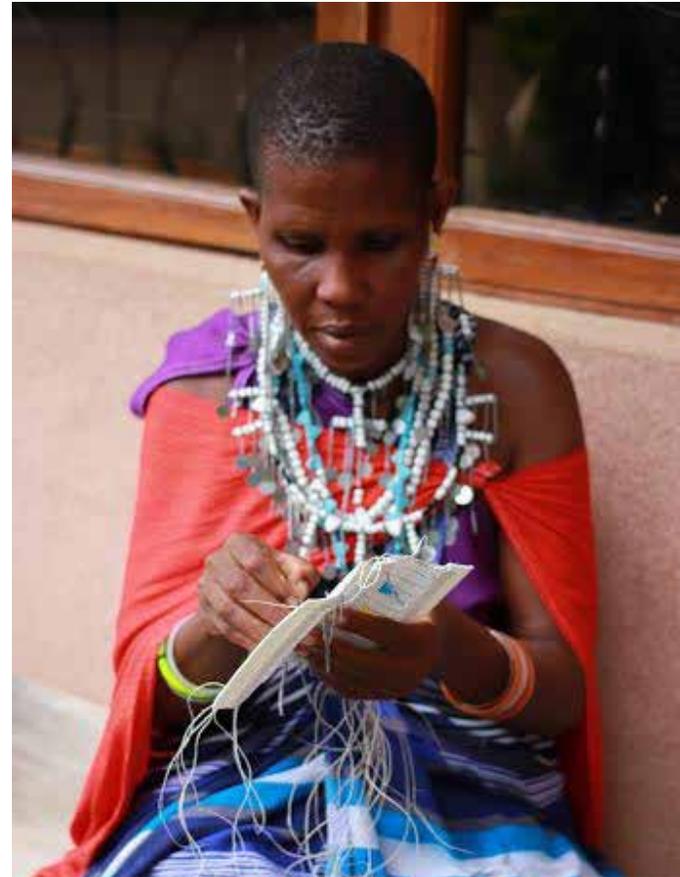




Sidai Maasai

[Sidai Maasai Women's Organization](#)

is a Tanzanian group composed of 34 women and 4 men who produce traditional jewelry. Since its establishment in 2005, the organization has grown substantially from 5 to 11 employees and 40 producers. These artisans' energy is used to work towards the goal of preserving the Maasai beading traditions and helping to economically sustain the women and their families, by providing education and empowerment through workshops and financial independence. The organization plans on using the grant to acquire tools and materials in order to increase efficiency, improve workflow and quality, and ultimately ensure the production of high quality products, while preserving traditional Maasai beading techniques. Eventually, they are hoping to solve the problem of marginalization of the Maasai women by empowering them through new economic opportunities and access to markets.





Ixbalamk'e Cooperative

Ixbalamk'e Cooperative (IC) is a group of 40 women from an isolated part in the North of Guatemala, who organized themselves in order to revive the Millennial Gauze weaving technique, typical of their ethnic group and community. By 1979, 70 Indigenous families from the Kekchi ethnic group who had fled several land displacements, resettlements and persecutions, obtained a piece of land from the government where they now live, weave and cultivate coffee.

With the small grant, IC intends to buy material and equipment to invest in building foot looms which will allow them to teach a new generation of young women the traditional weaving techniques. This effort will help further perpetuate their cultural identity, while providing a source of income for themselves, their community and the rest of women in the coop.

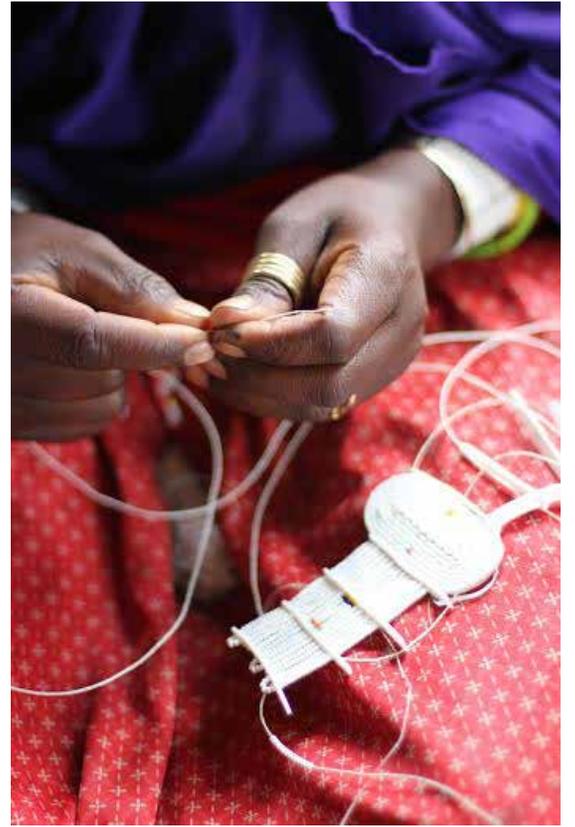
Llaguepulli Mapuche Indigenous Community

[The Llaguepulli Indigenous Community \(TLIC\)](#) consists of 60 families living in the small Llaguepulli Peninsula, in the southern tip of coastal Lake Budi in south-central Chile. The community was officially recog-



nized in June 1995, as a national Indigenous Community and over the years has been widely renowned in the region for their peaceful and effective struggle for Mapuche human rights and self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship, self-management and education. As part of a network of Mapuche ecotourism, TLIC has been successful in selling arts and crafts to tourists that visit their community. TLIC has included 2 outlets for artisanship where several artisans sell their creations at their workshops and homes, while two women artisans offer Mapuche loom workshops. The community has also the only community-managed school in Chile where students learn their cultural heritage, Mapuche history and language, and artisanal skills along with Western science and technology. With the grant, TLIC intends to acquire an overlock machine, a sewing machine, and wool spinning wheel. These tools will allow the artisans to save time in production, reach quality standards and bigger stocks, while maintaining the cultural value of Mapuche authenticity to their product.





***ATA's President's
First Visit to the
State of Puebla, Mexico:
A Human Story***





Idea+Materia is an artisan development project initiated by Rafael Moreno, the Governor of the state of Puebla, Mexico, who had been inspired by ATA's work in Chiapas and reached out to us for implementing a program in his state. Idea+Materia was born.

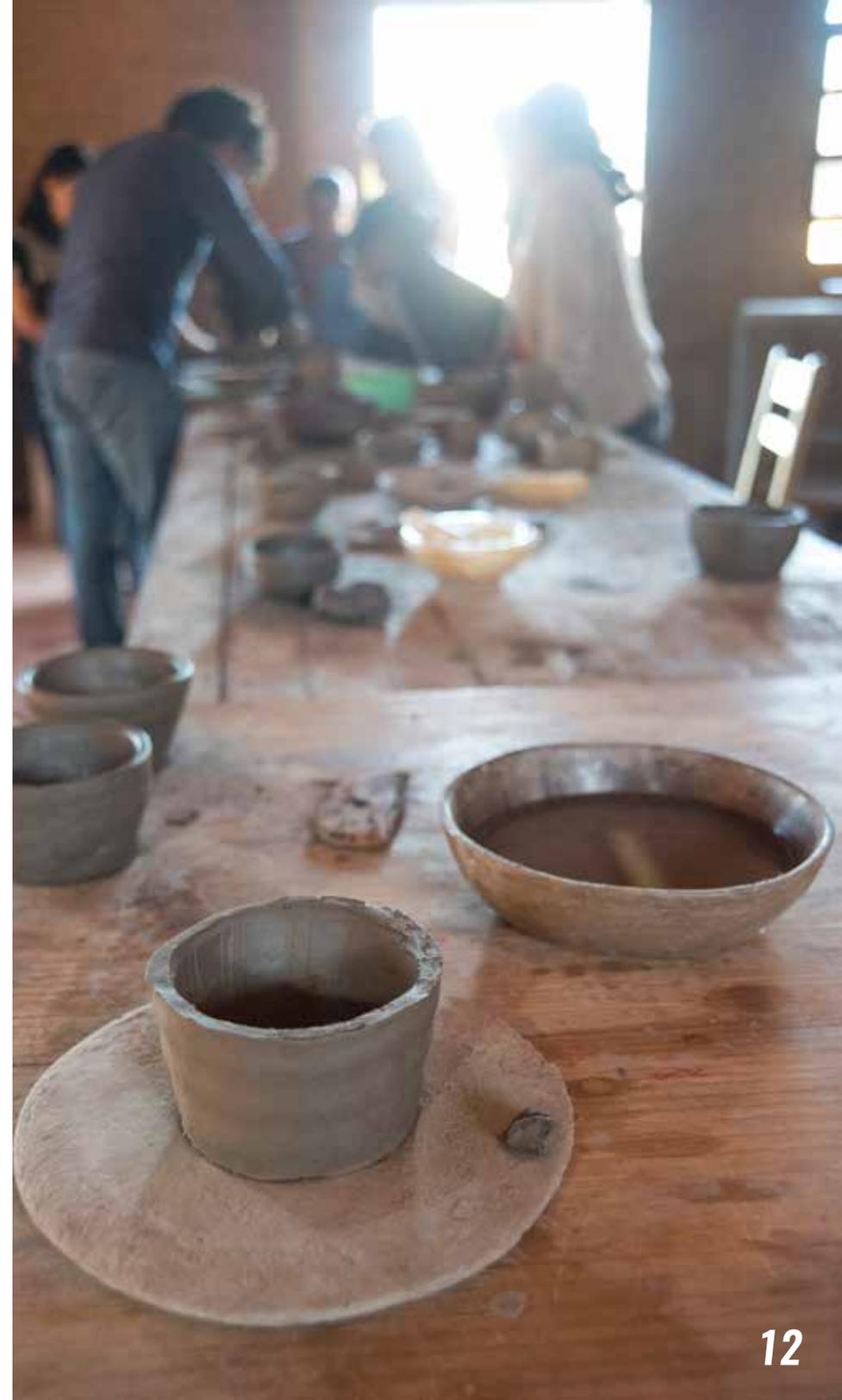
In November 2015, ATA's President, Bill Kruvant, was on the forefront throughout the whole process. He talks about his trip to Puebla and about the involvement of ATA in this Mexican region. In Puebla, he found a "bi-level" state of handcraft, with on the one hand sophisticated, high-skill and market savvy handcrafts, and the other hand more modest, less market-oriented handcrafts in need of improvement. It is on the latter that ATA's project is focused.



During his trip, Bill visited different sites and artisan groups. He explains how each of them is facing different types of challenges, whether it is a lack of basic tools, or a need to modernize their designs or to learn marketing strategies.

In partnership with local consultants, ATA works with these talented artisans to expand their business, and develop new product lines while preserving their cultural identity. "ATA's agenda is very practical," says Bill, "we want these people, that are mostly poor, to prosper. We also have an overarching goal of cultural preservation." He insists on the fact that one of ATA's main role is to show these artisans that they should build on what they've been doing for centuries, rather than trying to compete with Chinese factories. "The story is about people and culture, it's not about the stuff," concluded Bill, "handcraft is culture."

Come and check out Idea+Materia's new line being exhibited for the first time in booth number 429 at [NYNOW™](#), a home and lifestyle market featuring products from all over the world that will take place in the Big Apple from January 30th to February 3rd. The booth will include products developed by Mimi Robinson, as well as many other amazing handcrafts from Mexican artisans.





Aid to Artisans' Signature Market Readiness Program™ Traverses International Borders

In the fall 2015, ATA has been involved in many new and exciting projects in the effort to support international artisans. ATA implemented a series of its signature Market Readiness Program™ (MRP) workshops for the first time in both Morocco and China. These training sessions benefited about 60 artisans representing different parts of the craft sector.



China – Sichuan Market Development

In late October 2015, as part of the five-year Sichuan Market Development Activity (SMD), funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by [Creative Associates International](#), Aid to Artisans conducted for the first time in Chinese and Tibetan its Market Readiness Program to 28 Tibetan artisan entrepreneurs. The SMD Program focuses on working to improve sustainable livelihoods of ethnic Tibetans in China's Sichuan province, providing these communities with the skills and knowledge to thrive in a growing market economy.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE





Implemented by ATA MRP Consultant Manager Carol MacNulty and ATA Product Development Consultant Sophie Sauzeat, the goal of the MRP in China was to provide them a focused opportunity to gain market knowledge, practice market relevant skills and to consider next steps towards a profitable enterprise in a competitive marketplace.

The 28 Tibetan artisan entrepreneurs among whom 50% were women represented 16 various businesses that shared the same objective: to build economic development opportunities for skilled artisans in the larger Tibetan community. Among the participants were teachers, shop owners, monks, painters, sewers, graphic designers, restaurant owners, and many more. The 3-day training including topics such as distribution channel, planning for quality control, costing and pricing, a market strategy exercises among others. Each afternoon also included a product design review for each participant. Overall the training was a great success as it allowed them to “learn more about marketing strategies” writes one participant in her overall evaluation of the program.



A series of intense product development workshops were conducted by Sophie Sauzeat in Chengdu for 17 artisans representing 14 artisan businesses who participated in the MRP. Sophie spent half a day with each business providing them with designs concepts for a new product collection targeted to the tourist market. A total of about 140 new designs were given for felted bags, jewelry in recycle paper, horn, textile, Thankga, leather, felted toys, baby accessories, scarves etc. This new product collection will be introduced in a marketing event organized by ATA and SMD scheduled for June 2016 in Chengdu.



**Morocco -
Promise Pathways**





One such project, funded by the US Department of Labor, is currently being implemented in Morocco. In partnership with [Creative Associates International](#), ATA is introducing artisan train-

ings as part of the five-year [“Promise Pathways”](#) program that focuses on preventing child labor in the country by offering youth and households increased opportunities for access to demand driven training programs.

From September to November 2015, three MRP workshops were implemented in the Tensift-AlHaouz-Marrakech region by Frederic Alcantara, long time CL-ATA design consultant, and local partner

Said Mirch. As in all of CL-ATA’s artisan trainings, the goal is to upgrade craft products so that they can respond to market demand, to strengthen business skills, and to link artisans to buyers.

From sewers to jewelry makers, and from weavers to leather workers, 30 artisans participated in the training among which 11 were women. The four-day trainings which were conducted in both French and Arabic included topics such as costing and pricing, color & designs, basic business skills and many more. The series of trainings were followed by intensive product development workshops aiming to develop new collections for the local and regional tourism market.

Some of the new products were even exhibited for the first time to test the market at the Marrakech Christmas Fair that took place in December 2015. Lots of great responses were received to prepare the artisans for future exhibitions this year.

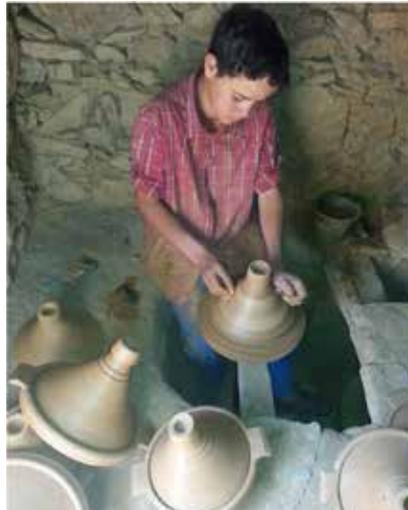




During winter and spring 2016, some of the artisans will have the opportunity to link to international buyers through [“Anou”](#) e-platform, an innovative approach to internet sales via a cell phone application based on symbols. By means of this application, artisans with low literacy levels can execute the entire process of product photography, specifications, pricing and selling from their own cell phones from their remote rural regions.



Please note: Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Labor. This material does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.



A Time of Giving: The Third Annual Holiday Craft Sale

ATA's third annual Holiday Craft Sale was a great success. We hosted artisans' products from over 20 countries this year, such as Egypt, Tanzania, Colombia, Turkey, Nepal, Guatemala and many more. We had also a very wide range of crafts, from necklaces and scarves to cushions and wine holders, which were all unique pieces embodying the spirit of our artisans, who made each of them with passion. Here is a highlight of the featured artisan groups.



-[Janakpur Women's Development Center](#), a Nepali organization seeking to create sustainable solutions to support and empower women artisans from Mithil culture in the Janakpur area.

-[Soma Artisans](#), which provides economic opportunities for women in the region of Soma, Manisa, Turkey, by producing crafted home décor.

-[Bahari Deco Crafts](#), from Tanzania, set itself the goal to share the cultural celebration of the Kanga cloth, which is part of the Swahili culture, through the making of skirts, bags and other handcrafts.

-[African Women and Youth Initiative](#), an organization providing income opportunities to local artisans in Kenya, by producing well-made beaded handbags, earrings, necklaces and bracelets.

-[Dokkan Craft](#), a newly established craft gallery aiming to help the artisan communities in Egypt. We were thrilled to see that so many came by despite the bad weather. We want to thank the ATA community and the people who donated and supported our cause, and we invite you to come even more massively next year to continue to help our artisans worldwide.





Thank You

To help support the many ATA programs,
please donate [here](#).

Aid to Artisans

