

Aid to Artisans

Winter 2021 Newsletter



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Cover Image: Spanish eMarket Readiness Program participant

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Back Cover: Artisans in Chalchihuitan. All photos by ATA Mexico staff

ATA Goes Digital!

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced many groups to migrate programs to cyberspace, and ATA is no exception. We have been highly successful in pivoting to online learning and here are some highlights.

A Partnership with MADE51

MADE51 is a global brand created by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNCHR) that carries home décor and accessories products handmade by refugees across the world in collaboration with local social enterprises (LSEs). [ATA partnered with MADE51 to present an online conference/workshop for local social enterprises (LSEs) in their network and

artisan refugees.

The workshop included sessions over 5 days. ATA's conducted and facilitated sessions on building networks, global opportunities and trends in Handmade post Covid, supply management, sales management, online marketing, and more. ATA also participated in knowledge sharing for the LSEs and UNHCR staff. The workshop created great enthusiasm among the LSEs. So much enthusiasm, in fact, that they formed a network-wide council to help members and the network develop new initiatives and products.

ATA is looking forward to a close



ATA partnered with Powered by People for a technology pilot in Mexico



MADE51 GLOBAL (VIRTUAL) WORKSHOP 2020

30TH NOV - 4TH DEC

1-4.30PM CET DAILY

(optional classes 12-1PM and extra discussion time available)

ongoing relationship with MADE51 and we see a bright future for the partnership.

ATA works with Trade+Impact to Implement the Handmade Futures Summit

Trade+Impact invited ATA to help lead this first-of-its-kind Handmade Futures Summit with William Sonoma for African export businesses to reimagine buyer partnership, product designs, and technological tools needed to thrive in the handcraft sector despite the pandemic. Trade+Impact is a non-profit trade association that brings together a global community of African and Middle Eastern members from the craft and natural cosmetic sectors, with a focus on women-led social enterprises. Its purpose is to advance these social enterprises enabling them to increase the impact on their communities and beyond

This digital event included panel

discussions and breakout sessions addressing the state of the handmade sector today and opportunities for tomorrow, featuring the Williams Sonoma team, industry experts, global buyers and leading social enterprises. A highlight of the event was a set of online booths where African export-ready business met buyers from Williams Sonoma and others.

As an event partner, ATA hosted a digital booth, offered a free DIY product photography guide in the digital gift bag. In addition, Lauren Barkume of ATA spoke at the conference's closing panel about the inspiring amount of collaboration the sector has seen since the beginning of the pandemic, and the enormous potential for online events like this to create new connections.

ATA is readying online courses for artisan businesses

ATA is excited to be developing online

courses in partnership with our network of ATA expert mentors that will be available on demand, to artisan businesses on such topics as marketing, branding, product development and design for the artisan sector.

ATA has received many requests for online courses. Partnering with the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP), ATA surveyed 111 women-led African artisan businesses on their most pressing training needs. The survey found the 3 top priorities were global opportunities and trends in Handmade, marketing and branding, and product development and design.

We will be launching the first courses in 2021 with additional courses to follow. The courses will provide guidance and practices that can be applied immediately. Details will be published soon and if you or anyone you know might be interested in taking these courses, please contact Lauren Barkume at lauren@creativelearning.org.

ATA joins virtual tradeshow and B2B platforms

Marketing and selling artisan products despite the pandemic challenges is crucial for the survival of artisan businesses. Finding digital ways to do this has become a major objective for ATA. ATA onboarded artisan brands such as ATA Mexico and Dancing Yak to two virtual tradeshow: the Las Vegas Market's ShopZio and NY NOW Digital Market. These virtual shows gave access to over 300 North American new buyers for the onboarded artisan brands.

ATA also partnered with Powered by People.



Dancing Yak participated in the ShopZio B2B platform



Dancing Yak also exhibited with ATA at NY NOW Digital Market

This firm runs a mobile technology platform for distributed production for the handmade sector, enabling artisan businesses to better manage their production processes to become a reliable mainstream manufacturing partner for buyers. We began a pilot with our team in Mexico this winter. We expect the team to be fully functional through the mobile production technology by Spring 2021 enabling them to communicate with the producers across Chiapas and Yucatan more effectively and to have all their production processes online and traceable.

Photographs courtesy of Powered by People, MADE51, and Dancing Yak.

Procuring Positives in the Pandemic

Inventing the Spanish-eMarket Readiness Program

With the cancellation of NYNOW, the venue for ATA's Market Readiness Program shifted from New York to cyberspace. ATA reinvented the four and a half day MRP, transforming it into the eMarket Readiness Program (eMRP). With the success of the eMRP, we decided to present the program in Spanish. While the English version was 100-percent virtual, the Spanish-eMRP mixed virtual techniques with a revised version of the in-person MRP. The Spanish-eMRP brought nearly four-dozen artisans from Mexico, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Mozambique, to work virtually with four international experts from Argentina, Greece, Belgium and New York and five mentors from

the ATA's Manos Vivas Mexico team.

"The health crisis brought out the best in the leaders at ATA and Manos Vivas, who figured out how to preserve the lessons of our traditional MRP," says María Eugenia (Maru) Pineda, ATA's Mexico Director. "And the best in the artisans, too, who rallied and participated in this new format."

"The level of interest was extraordinary," echoes Ricardo Iglesias, Deputy Director, of Manos Vivas. "There was a hunger for knowledge and training so that artisans could learn and find opportunities to make money



Some of the Spanish eMRP participants joined the virtual class socially distanced in small groups and masked

Participants of the Spanish eMarket Readiness Program joined group discussions and small group coaching



York. As Lauren noted, “We were able to help so many more people with this new format. Most participants would not have been able to come to the program in New York.

Since not all of the participants had computer know-how or even access, the hybrid Spanish-eMRP ATA adapted to their needs.. “The adaptations made — in both language and methodology — made the participants feel very comfortable,” says Maru.

Safety precautions for the in-person portions of the program included masks and social distancing with participants breaking into teams in four different physical locations. The mentors on the ground in Mexico were leaders from Manos Vivas, who had participated in ATA’s virtual eMRP (the English version) in August.

The Spanish eMRP opened a training opportunity to a whole new group of artisans and entrepreneurs. “Several young people who are representatives of a new generation of artisans with great potential and basic knowledge in communicating online joined the Spanish eMRP,” says Ricardo. Young people, he noted, will teach their artisan communities and lead them forward to the next level. “The young people are bilingual and so could translate the Spanish-eMRP into their native languages. Being able to access this course directly, which they had heard of, could not attend because of the language barrier, excited the participants,” said Ricardo. “Few international organizations with ATA’s prestige carry out training like the Spanish-eMRP that allows direct contact between

top-level specialists and artisans.”

The breakout sessions were exceptional and high on the list of favorite activities for the participants. Popular, too, were the classes on trends in the international handicrafts market, costing and pricing, and the panel with buyers. A Virtual Cocktail Hour on Zoom offered an opportunity for eMRP Spanish participants to meet and connect with ATA’s wider network.

While everyone was nervous about running such an innovative program for the first time,, “In the end we were thrilled with how successful it was, and how participants were able to network and make new connections” says Lauren. “This pivot to the digital eMRP has really helped us to reach new artisans worldwide. We’re really excited about what

this means for the future.”

“Being able to carry out the eMRP in Spanish meant bringing North and South America closer together. It was an event unprecedented in Mexico,” says Maru. “The enthusiasm to participate has been generated, The ATA Team is excited to host the next eMRP, tentatively planned for May.”

*Written by Cari Shane
Photographs by ATA Mexico staff*

during the economic crisis created by the pandemic.”

Not only was the price point for the Spanish-eMRP more accessible — \$740 per person instead of the \$3000 per person fee for the in-person MRP in New York — it didn’t require international travel or the time consuming process of securing visas. Most important, says Lauren Barkume, Training Director with ATA in Washington, DC, we were able to help more participants —45 instead of the 30 we could teach in New

A Spanish eMRP participant from the ATA Mexico program participates in the online networking ATA Cocktail Hour



The live Zoom training included post-COVID-19 color trends presented by Patti Carpenter



What's Next!

ATA Online Courses Launch

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eMarket Readiness Program June 8-11 2021

The [eMarket Readiness Program™ \(eMRP\)](#) is a live online training for the artisan sector. Aid to Artisans has distilled 27 years of experience in offering the Market Readiness Program at the NY NOW trade show to develop this 12 hour online program. It will give you the tools and market information you need to sell your products into the changing US retail market.

Designed for international artisan producers, designers, exporters, and leaders of craft-based enterprises, this immersive training offers intensive learning, hands-on exercises, one-on-one coaching, and small group learning.

[Join the eMRP English waitlist to be the first to join when registration opens.](#)

Aid to Artisans

Artisans around the world need your support!
Please make a donation by clicking [here](#).

