Canvas Home
Small Grants Program

2021 Report

Photo: PashooPakshee

CANVAS HOME
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Creative Learning
Aid to Artisans
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About the Program
The canvas home™ Small Grant program is a long-standing funding program sponsored by canvas home™, a retailer of artisan furniture, ceramics, and textiles. It provides artisan businesses with direct and immediate financial assistance that can lay the groundwork for sustainable incomes for artisans and their community. These grants are designed to allow artisan groups to acquire materials, tools, equipment, training, marketing services in order to expand employment and generate income.

Since 2013 the canvas home™ Small Grant program has aided more than 1,000 women and 280 men by providing grants to 35 groups in 21 different countries. In Fall 2021, 10 artisan businesses received a canvas home™ Small Grant enabling them to impact the lives of many individual artisans around the world. The artisan companies come from the following countries below:
Abexinah Orphans and Vulnerable Community Information Centre – Uganda:

Founded in March 2008, Abexinah is a community-based organization located in Uganda. It is comprised of 110 artisans (60 women and 50 men) and supports over 40 children. The organization trains members in carpentry and joinery, computer science and tailoring. Products offered includes beds, chairs, benches, cultural furniture, and clothes. They received a Canvas Home Small grant of $1000. With the grant they purchased the following:
- 3 sewing machines
- Certified woods
- Nails
- Glue
- Tailoring Materials

The grant enabled Abexinah to purchase raw materials that were used to produce custom furniture orders. Through the grant, the organization was able to increase its customer base and increase sales during Covid-19. Profit made from the sold furniture products, was reinvested in the organization, allowing Abexinah to purchase additional raw materials for future artisans. This business model has allowed Abexinah to become more sustainable. When it becomes safe to convene trainings, Abexinah plans to conduct a tailoring workshop for the artisans using the 3 newly purchased sewing machines.
Chelma Advisory Institute - Kenya

Founded in 2004, Chelma Advisory Institute is a non-profit organization based in Nakuru, Kenya. Chelma Advisory Institute helps unemployed youth, school dropouts, adolescent mothers, and women to acquire artisan skills. Their main objective for fifty artisans is to support sustainable development, self-reliance, and sustainability of local initiatives and enterprises. They produce sculptures, human figures, chess sets, cups, plates, bowls, candle holders, flowerpots and more.

Chelma Advisory Institute received a Canvas Home Small grant of $1000. With the grant they purchased:

- 12 Hammers
- 12 Shovels
- 12 Mallets
- 12 Hand Saws
- 12 Chisels
- 12 Hacksaws
- 12 Axes
- 12 Manual Hand Drills

The tools purchased with the grant funds, allowed for Chelma to increase the number of products produced and the number of artisans they can employ. The tools also allowed for the organization to become more efficient in producing crafts and overall, more sustainable. In 2021, they sold a wholesale order of 1000 pieces that were equivalent to $1,322.17. Prior to this order, sales were only $500 due to Covid-19.

Chelma has also incorporated more training programs in their organization using the newly purchased equipment to empower more artisans. In addition to technical craft skills, Chelma is training its members in business management skills, such as communication, organizational roles, problem-solving, and more. Overall, the grant has allowed Chelma to improve integration of traditional craft knowledge, increase income for the village population, and increase the level of involvement in the market economy.

Example of tools purchased using the grant funds

Example of products produced
Conserve India – India

Conserve India is a non-profit organization founded in March 1998 in Delhi, India. Conserve India works towards environmental conservation while simultaneously creating socially uplifting conditions by empowering underprivileged individuals with employment opportunities. They currently work with 150 women and 80 men. They produce bags, wallets, home décor, laptop sleeves, scarves and jewelry. Many of the products created by Conserve India are made using recycled materials that are converted into a patented “vegan Leather” which produce both durable and environmentally conscious products.

Conserve India received a Canvas Home Small grant of $1000. With the grant they purchased:
- Professional Photographs for marketing
- Newly designed product catalogue
- New samples/prototypes

With the help of the grant to procure professional photographs and a newly designed product catalogue, Conserve India received over $8,000 is orders, with more expected soon. Prior to the grant and the use of the new catalogue, annual orders were approximately $1,800. Conserve India is looking forward to receiving new orders and to introduce the new product samples to the market.
Freed Kamalari Development Forum – Nepal

Freed Kamalari Development Forum (FKDF) is a non-profit organization founded in June 2012 in Lumbini, Nepal. FKDP works to empower freed Kamalaris (young girls who are sent to moneylenders to work off loans taken out by family) through education, income generation, organizational development, cooperative strengthening, and above all else, eliminating the kamalari system. Their mission statement is “We want education not slavery.” They currently work with 35 women, although beneficiaries of their work go well beyond. They produce Tribal Tharu Dresses (Lehenga), dolls, basketry and more.

FKDF received a Canvas Home Small grant of $1000. With the grant they purchased:
- 3 sewing machines
- 3 interlock machines
- Travel to procure the new equipment

The grant has allowed FKDF to purchase new equipment that increased the production capacity of the women artisans. Artisans are now producing 15 Lehenga dresses monthly, which has greatly improved their monthly income. Of the artisans they work with, 12 are fulltime employees. New machines (accompanied by tables) have also improved the working conditions of the women. The machines have also allowed the quality and quality assurance of products made to improve. While production was halted during Covid-19, the purchase of the new equipment supported the promotion of the enterprise once conditions were safe.
Fundación Hilo Sagrado – Colombia

Fundación Hilo Sagrado is a non-profit organization founded in 2013 in Bogotá, Colombia. Through education, economic empowerment and sustainable development, their goal is that the Wayúu communities they work with can become self-sustaining, provide women with the tools they need to become micro-entrepreneurs, take ownership of their own work and escape extreme poverty. Hilo Sagrado currently work with 125 women, and 142 men. They produce many colorful handwoven products including handbags, sandals, shoes, fashion accessories, jewelry, backpacks and more.

Fundación Hilo Sagrado received a Canvas Home Small grant of $1000. With the grant they purchased:
  • 3 sewing machines

The grant allowed Fundación Hilo Sagrado to purchase three new sewing machines. The new machines will allow for a diversification in products and increase the number of women who can benefit from Fundación Hilo Sagrado mission. A workshop will take place in May 2022 to train 16 women on how to use the machines to create Mantas, a traditional dress that has fishing on the borders and embroidery. The machines are also integral to a new initiative to provide menstrual underwear. More information about this exciting initiative can be found here: [https://hilosagrado.org/blogs/projects/glow-with-the-flow](https://hilosagrado.org/blogs/projects/glow-with-the-flow) For a short video about the impact of the grant, click here: [Fundación Hilo Sagrado on Vimeo](https://www.vimeo.com/shortvideo)
Orissa Rural and Urban Producers’ Association – India

Orissa Rural and Urban Producers’ Association (ORUPA) is a non-profit organization founded in March 1990 in Odisha, India. ORUPA’s mission is to create opportunity and avenues for the development of crafts and artisans. They work with volunteers to support over 7,000 artisans/family members by supplying training and raw materials. Over 5,550 of the beneficiaries of ORUPA’s work are women. Artisans keep profits from all products that are sold. The artisans work with over 40 different types of craft including natural fiber products, applique, painting, stone carvings, terracotta pottery and more.

ORUPA received a Canvas Home Small grant of $1000. With the grant they purchased the following raw materials:
- Palm leaf
- Thread
- Measuring tapes
- Scissors
- Needles
- Fabric Cutters
- Large Wooden Table for the Workshop

The grant has allowed ORUPA to purchase many raw materials and tools. The additional raw materials allowed the artisans to create more products, and therefore increase their income. The tools purchased improved working conditions and increased ease of work as products could be produced more efficiently and less labor intensive. Since the grant, product sales have increased by RS 10,000 (Approximately $130) per artisan. “Increase in income is the single most important impact of the grant.” – Member of ORUPA

Artisans with their new raw materials and tools provided by the grant funds

Stone Carving Card Holder
PashooPakshee – India

**PashooPakshee** is a social enterprise founded in June 2016 in Mumbai, India. PashooPakshee’s mission follows three pillars; Design, Train and Sustain. Designs are produced by local artisans from marginalized communities living in wildlife conflict areas. Artisans are training and empowered with the technical skills and are provided to tools for quality control as well as raw materials. PashooPakshee then provides marketing support, supply chain and inventory support throughout the process. Currently PashooPakshee works with 21 women. The artisans work with over 40 different types of craft including natural fiber products, applique, painting, stone carvings, terracotta pottery and more.

PashooPakshee received a Canvas Home Small grant of $1000. With the grant they purchased the following raw materials:
- Marketing Posters
- Bamboo
- Paints
- Pegboards
- Electrician Service
- Termite Resistance Spray
- Room Separator
- Inventory Storage Cupboard

With the purchase of the new materials provided by the grant, more women have been motivated to join the center. The center has grown from 6 women to 15 fulltime women and 6 working seasonally. With the room separator and inventory storage, the center is now open to tourist who can visit and purchase directly from the artisans. Although tourist visitors has been prevented by the third wave of Covid-19 in the area, the income generation has motivated the artisans to continue and interest is growing in the neighboring villages. “The look and feel of our center changed. From a production center it now looks a pretty craft center. This has got a positive vibe to the place and we can see that on our women artisans who now take pride at coming to the center.” – Member of PashooPakshee

Handmade bird toys going into production

Newly designed shop space in the center
Quazi Designs – eSwatini

Founded in March 2010, Quazi Designs is a commercial business based in Mbabane, eSwatini. Quazi Designs began with a partnership between a designer and a local magazine distributor to address the much needed employment in the area. They believe in “sustainable design, ethical production, transparency, and craftsmanship.” Currently, Quazi Designs works with 14 women. All the women they work with are full time employees of Quazi Design. Using recycled waste newspaper and magazines, Quazi produces high end jewelry and homeware.

Quazi Designs received a Canvas Home Small grant of $1000. With the grant they purchased the following raw materials:
- Brass Polisher
- Industrial Blender for Paper Pulp

The grant allowed Quazi Designs to purchase new tools for their production. The industrial blender is used to efficiently make paper pulp that is then shaped and sanded. This blender replaced older tools that were broken. With these new production tools, the production process has improved, as well as the quality of the products and the confidence of the artisans. “Thank you so much, this truly helped us last year and will have a lasting impact.” – Member of Quazi Designs

Handmade paper pulp Nesta earrings in blue
Newly purchased polishing belt
Tsandza Weaving – eSwatini

Previously known as Rosecraft Weaving, Tsandza Weaving is a social enterprise that produces high-quality products handwoven in pure natural fibers by talented artisans in rural Eswatini. Tsandza Weaving’s mission is to provide an opportunity for a constantly expanding population of rural women to develop and learn new skills that allow them to generate income to care for their families. Tsandza Weaving intends to use the grant money to buy marketing and branding items to support its business operations.

Tsandza Weaving received a Canvas Home Small grant of $1000. With the grant they purchased the following raw materials:

- A Samsung Smart Phone
- Lighting Equipment

With the grant, Tsandza Weaving was able to use the smart phone and lighting equipment to take high quality photos for marketing to buyers. The group was also able to use the smart phone to video chat with potential buyers resulting in a R9,500 order. Prior to the purchase of the smart phone, Tsandza was either unable to provide prospective buyers with fast imagery, or would have to hire a costly photographer. Now they can hold video calls with buyers, and immediately provide them with beautiful imagery following the call. “To be able to jump on a zoom call at any time, anywhere to participate in client meetings, allows us to provide our customers with a fast and professional service.” – Kerry James of Tsandza Weaving

Handwoven designs

Artisan weaving on loom
Unidas para Vivir Mejor – Guatemala

Founded in February 1996, Unidas para Vivir Mejor (UPAVIM) is an association located in Guatemala. Unidas para Vivir Mejor (UPAVIM), which means, “United to Live Better,” is a community-based association of women that is located in a very poor area of Guatemala City, called Colonia La Esperanza. UPAVIM now operates a daycare center, a Montessori method elementary school, a fair-trade crafts program, a small bakery, and health services that provide its members with a fair wage and support a network of local women and families. Through the organization, the women of UPAVIM receive fair wages and are empowered to make collective decisions regarding the association’s activities, all while developing critical services for area residents. UPAVIM currently works with over 75 women. UPAVIM produces woven crafts including children’s clothes, toy ornaments, bags, scarves, vests, jewelry, oven mits, potholders, aprons and more.

UPAVIM received a Canvas Home Small grant of $1000. With the grant they purchased the following raw materials:
- Certification testing for lead, phthalates, flammability, and heavy metals in fabric
- Product tags

The grant award has supported a certification process for the expansion of UPAVIM’s product line in children’s crafts. This certification process includes tests for lead, phthalates, flammability, and heavy metals in fabric. The certification process ensures that UPAVIM’s products are in line with the US Consumer Product Safety Commission standards. The grant award has also been used to create and purchase the needed product tags that UPAVIM will sew into its products. “Without the certification process and tags, UPAVIM could not expand its sales into a number of children’s products, a crucial element in helping UPAVIM be viable long-term.” – Member of UPAVIM