



Creative Handicrafts

Women's self employment center

**annual
report**

2012 - 2013



“ It is my dream that all women should become economically and socio politically self reliant and live a dignified life ”



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CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS (Regd) क्रिएटिव हैंडिक्राफ्ट्स (रजि)



“ Never underestimate the power of a woman ”
Nellie McClung

A little more than quarter of a decade has taught us at Creative Handicrafts the truth of this statement. Over the years we had observed, experienced and grown on this reality.

Started as an initiative by a visionary Sr. Isabel Martin MCJ, CH today has a group of 800 strong women in the Co-operatives and even more in the saving and credit groups. It was Sr. Isabel's dream that disadvantaged women would be liberated from the challenges they faced socially. She aimed to do this by teaching them to be economically independent, so that they could support themselves and their children. Thus CH was born. Training is given to the women in sewing and a fair wage with dignity of labour once they join us full time. Today as we continue to base our activities on this dream we have also grown to be a Fair Trade Organization that stands for a just world through justice in trade.

The recent spate of events of violence against women have led us to reflect on and admire the strength of our women at Creative Handicrafts, who have gone beyond their situations, to build a better and fairer life for themselves and their children.

last note from our founder

Dear Friends,

As I jot down these few lines my memory takes me back to those days when I was prompted from within, an inner voice, telling me to do something for the women who need my support and caring. This inner voice was the words of Jesus, “when you did these to your brothers and sisters you did it unto me”. This inner voice always made it impossible for me to turn away from women in very difficult circumstances and doing nothing about it.

Today, after twenty nine years of this journey with women from the slum communities, I feel very happy for the challenge that I took to initiate a self employment program 1984. It was a challenge and a struggle but worth taking seeing the impact that it made in the lives of many. I have seen the women changing and changing for better.

I have withdrawn myself from my active involvement in the organization and it is a delight for me to see the organization continue to pursue the mission that we set long ago. It is encouraging to see the organization reaching out to newer areas of work in the field of education and women empowerment. The organization has graduated to be a Fair Trade Organization and is today one that is looked upon as an example for economic development program for women. All these make me very happy and contented.

However, I would like to see more happening. One thing that disturbed me the most has been the instances of women becoming prey to the money lenders. I have seen these predators descend upon them on the days when the women received their pay from CH. In years to come I would like to see CH reach out to more and more women in the slums and organize them to get out of this debt trap.

One problem that makes the woman absolutely vulnerable is the absence of a roof over her head. Most of the women in the slum communities do not have a house, however small that could be, and that makes her suffer all the atrocities meted out to her. I would like to continue to help women in any way possible to have a roof over their head.

Another area that CH needs to concentrate more in the years to come would be to socially empower the women. It is important that there is a change in their mind set and in their belief system which is oppressive in nature and only these changes could bring about a sustainable change in their lives. I would want CH to concentrate more on social empowerment of women in the years to come.

Thank you,

Isabel Martin MCJ

from the Chairperson

Creative Handicrafts has been my second family for the past 17 years. I have accepted the position of Chairperson from 2011. I am still working with one of the women's co-operative, and because of my experiences, I can tell about the situations and difficulties which many women go through.

The founder of Creative Handicrafts, Sister Isabel saw the problems of women in slum communities and so she started Creative Handicrafts for women. It was sister's dream to develop the skills of women and make them self-independent and to fulfill this dream; Sister took efforts till her last breath. She succeeded in her efforts but we lost her. In the month of March 2013, Sister Isabel left for her heavenly abode leaving all of us heartbroken. But I feel that she is with us always.

One of the important things which I would like to mention here is that there are no restrictions of education, experience, age for the women who want to join Creative Handicrafts. Needy women, even if they do not know stitching, are trained and given the opportunity to earn their living. Women are provided with healthy work environment and paid fair wages for their work. Creative Handicrafts is not only concerned with the economic empowerment of women but women are also helped in their personal difficulties. All the staff and management take special efforts to make sure that, women are provided help in their problems in whichever way possible. We have also established Savings and Credit groups which are useful in the times of financial difficulties.

The management tries hard to procure orders so that the women can get more work and earn well. We are also in the process of opening new shops for local production. All the women would like to see Creative Handicrafts growing higher and higher, so that many needy women can get employment and become independent.

Lalita Pawar
(Works at Mogra Welfare Society)



from the director

Dear Friends,

The year that has gone by was a very sad one for Creative Handicrafts. We lost our Founder, Sr. Isabel Martin MCJ, who toiled relentlessly for 29 long years empowering women. Hence, I wish to jot down a few lines in her memory.

All who have had an opportunity to associate with Sr. Isabel Martin and Creative Handicrafts find it difficult to reconcile to this reality that our dear sister is no more with us physically. Time definitely plays an important role in filling this void that her departure has created. In the past six months the women, staff and all here have learnt to tread the path shown by her but without her constant guidance.

Probably Sr. Isabel knew for many years that she had to finally leave for her permanent abode. Hence, she has been tying all the loose ends at Creative Handicrafts, distancing herself from the daily management of the organization and allowing the organization to stand on its own merit and strength. This definitely allows Creative Handicrafts to continue to work for the dignity of women and children. I wish to thank her for this vision.

One of the thoughts that came up in the minds of our trustees, women members of the organization, supporters and well wishers was on how to keep her spirit alive in all our involvements and in good times and in not so good times. Her spirit and her vision was never overtly spelt out when she was alive because she evinced that in all her actions and the organization has imbibed the same. We sat down to spell it out and realized that the most important value for her was “help the women stand on their legs and live a life of dignity and equality”. So Creative Handicrafts vowed to uphold and keep alive this spirit though process of keeping this spirit might change according to time and circumstances.

The only way to keep Sr. Isabel alive is by keeping this organization vibrant and relevant at all times. We, all at Creative Handicrafts, remain very thankful to all our Fair Trade Partners, Funders, Supporters and Well wishers, for standing firm behind all our efforts and supporting us in every way to keep the spirit of Sr. Isabel alive and to work towards making the lives of women a life of dignity.

Thank you,

Johny Joseph
Director

from the Secretary

1984 – 2013 (29 years) - a long journey travelled by Creative Handicrafts. It's a great joy to see that Creative Handicrafts has grown leaps and bounds since its inception.

It was the dream of our founder, Sister Isabel Martin, to empower the underprivileged and marginalized women, to become self independent. Looking at the progress that Creative Handicrafts has achieved since its inception, I must say that it's the "Strength of the women", that has enabled them to prove their ability, become confident and self independent by withstanding and overcoming all obstacles, thereby proving the proverb "WHERE THERE IS A WILL, THERE IS A WAY."

It gives me immense pride to know that our women have been able to educate their children. Some of them have achieved their graduation and Ph.D degrees and are well settled in life. Some of them have become teachers and are imparting knowledge to the younger generation. I am very glad to make a mention that all these successful children are girls. Yes, we do have some boys too, who have become Engineers, and some who are working hard for a bright future.

CH has left no stone unturned in doing their best to reach out at the Community Level too.

The micro-credit society is a blessing in disguise, as it keeps the women away from going to cruel money lenders.

The Balwadis – for the toddlers, which helps them with their basic knowledge and prepares them for school admissions

The Balvikas - for regular study time and coping up with school homework.

The Crèche - for nurturing the children, while the women attend to work.

Sponsorship programmes - for meeting with school expenses.

Ration - for those living from hand to mouth.

Home Projects for those who are unable to join the Centers (Workshops).

Teamwork is the key to success for every organization. CH is blessed with a very efficient, sincere and dedicated staff, which I have seen working tirelessly, without complaining and serving the organization to their best. I am privileged to be associated with Creative Handicrafts since 1996 and see it growing tremendously.

From soft toys to table cloths, bed spreads etc., then moving on to garments and now even to school uniforms. Congratulations and Hats Off! to the Creative family.

Our dear founder – late Sr. Isabel Martin's vision was to empower the downtrodden, underprivileged and marginalized women. She wanted every woman to be self independent and live a dignified life. She stressed on adult education. Sr. Isabel has left a void in our hearts. No one can ever take her place. But let us keep her spirit going and continue to work towards fulfilling the aim and vision of CH.

Wishing CH a bright future and God's grace and guidance in accomplishing its goals.

Elizabeth Poojari

mission

Creative Handicrafts aims to build self sustainable and self reliant communities through economic and socio-cultural empowerment of unskilled and disadvantaged women.

values

To be a fair-trade organization by maintaining and implementing fair trade principles and practices

To be open and inclusive and not to discriminate on grounds of race, religion, caste or sexual orientation

Taking affirmative action on behalf of women who are disadvantaged and unskilled

objectives

To provide opportunity for disadvantaged women to be economically self reliant.

To socially and economically empower women.

To tackle social and environmental issues and to provide local services to the members of the cooperatives and for people living in the slums.

To provide basic education and educational assistance to the children of the slum communities.



Fair Trade Certification



CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS
GUARANTEED
FAIR TRADE

Creative Handicrafts has been a member of the World Fair Trade Organization since 2003. In 2013 WFTO has initiated the WFTO Fair Trade Guarantee System. Creative Handicrafts was one of the 10 pilot organizations from the entire world to go through the certification process which involved a Self Assessment Report, Peer Assessment and an External Audit. Creative Handicrafts has successfully completed the process and is now certified to use the Label. Soon all the products of CH will have on them the Fair Trade Certification Label.

CH Social Outcome 2012-13 (numbers)

IMPACT MADE ON WOMEN & CHILDREN THROUGH CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS

790

Number of women who were provided means of livelihood in co-operatives and on part time basis

180

Number of children benefitted from Day Care



168

Number of sessions organized for women empowerment and capacity building programmes

204

Number of children who were impacted through Balwadis



434

Number of children who underwent health checkups

145

Number of children who were sponsored in their education

85

Number of women who provided training for tailoring

9

Number of Balwadis operated

21

Number of sessions organized for children



54

Number of Saving and Credit Groups



450

Number of customers served through Asli Foods on daily basis

64

Numbers of Sales and Exhibitions organized

Economic Justice

Fair Trade Producer Groups

Creative Handicrafts opens its doors to unskilled women that are struggling financially. Once working members at Ch, their earnings help them meet the basic requirements at their home. With much planning money is kept apart for food, children's fees and house rent. They try hard to squeeze money out for a little monthly saving. This economic stability has become a source of strength in their lives.



Beula Jose dreamt for several years that her children would get a good education. But the reality was that her finances had reached a stage where there was no money for basic necessities like food, clothing and shelter. After she joined Ch she started earning well and educated her children. The Ch sponsorship program also helped pay for their educational expenses. Her son worked hard and now he is studying in a reputed engineering college in Mumbai. She was able to meet the cost of his higher education through sponsorship, other NGOs that Ch networks with and the Ch Saving and Credit group. He is very grateful to have come so far, he knows that without his mother none of this would have been possible.



Asli Food

Asli foods have been functioning successfully for last 13 years. It is an income generating program through which healthy and delicious lunch parcels are delivered to around 450 customers on a daily basis and extra catering orders are taken as per the requirement. Asli foods provide employment opportunities to the women who otherwise do not pick up the skills in other jobs. This project has successfully provided an alternate means of livelihood to many women who are honest and hard working.



Saving and Credit Groups

To inculcate the habit of saving among the women and to provide access to credit, Creative Handicrafts have started the Savings and Credit Groups in different slum communities. Today, we have 54 groups with a total of 605 members. The women in our Saving and Credit groups save money on a monthly basis and after the completion of 6 months of savings they are allowed to take loans which are proportional to their savings at a very low rate of interest, 12 per cent per annum. The women use this money for various purposes such as education of their children, emergency medical needs of their family members etc. Social workers conduct regular monthly meetings with the groups and during the meetings apart from the collection of money, they also discuss and conduct sessions on different issues related to women as well as communities.



Services of Education & Health

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Balwadis / Preschool

The Balwadis cater to children in the age-group of 2.5 to 5 years with the aim of preparing these children for formal school. Balwadis have been started in slum and tribal areas of Aarey colony keeping in mind the importance of imparting education to these children as well as the malnutrition among children in many poorer communities. In the Balwadis, children are provided with basic education and nutritious food on a daily basis. Our main aim is to ensure that every child in the balwadi is enrolled into a school at the right age once their pre-school education is completed. Presently we are having 9 Balwadis through which we impact 204 children in these communities. There are various training workshops, group discussions and presentations organized for the teachers from Balwadi, Balvikas Kendra and Crèche. Teachers also learn new teaching techniques and methods as well as prepare colourful and self explanatory teaching materials.

Crèche/Bal Vikas Kendra

Crèche is a day care center where our women drop their kids off before work and pick them up after work. The crèche was specifically designed so that the women members of Creative Handicrafts could have a safe place to keep their children while they are away at work. It is also open to the community i.e. those who are not working at CH can also send their children to the crèche. The crèche is managed by a coordinator, a helper and a teacher. In the crèche the children are helped with their studies, they can take rest and play. In the year 2012-13, 60 children benefitted from the services of the crèche.

The Bal Vikas Kendra works with children that belong to a slum area which lacks conducive environment for their growth. It is a day care center catering to children in the age group of 3 to 16 years. There is a co-ordinator, two teachers to teach the children and a cook to prepare the lunch for the children. All the staff of Bal Vikas Kendra takes responsibility for the development of each child and make sure that they are going ahead with their education. Children are also encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports, cultural programmes apart from their education. A number of 120 children were benefitted from the services of Bal Vikas Kendra.

In the year 2012-13, apart from the academic guidance, various activities were organized for the children. They were taken for educational exposure visit to 'Nehru planetarium, Worli'. There were sessions conducted on Aerobics, Yoga and Meditation. They celebrated Children's Day along with Diwali Festival. There was a screening of a movie - 'Ice-age - 4' which was enjoyed by the children. They also participated in 'Diwali Mela' organized by 'Shelter Don Bosco' in November 2012. There were games, talent hunt program, art and crafts activities, career guidance and an awareness program on addiction was organized for the children. There was also a session on the issue of child sexual abuse and self defense conducted with children.



The Blessings of Sponsorship

We have started the sponsorship project under which the educational expenses of children are met as we believe that sponsorship is a really effective way of helping children in poor communities to get a decent start in life; which will also help them to come out of the spiral of poverty. In this scheme one or more children of every CH woman is sponsored. This program also covers the other needy children in the slums whose parents cannot afford their education. In the year 2012-2013 a number of 145 children were sponsored for their education through the help of our partners and donors.

Health Awareness Programmes

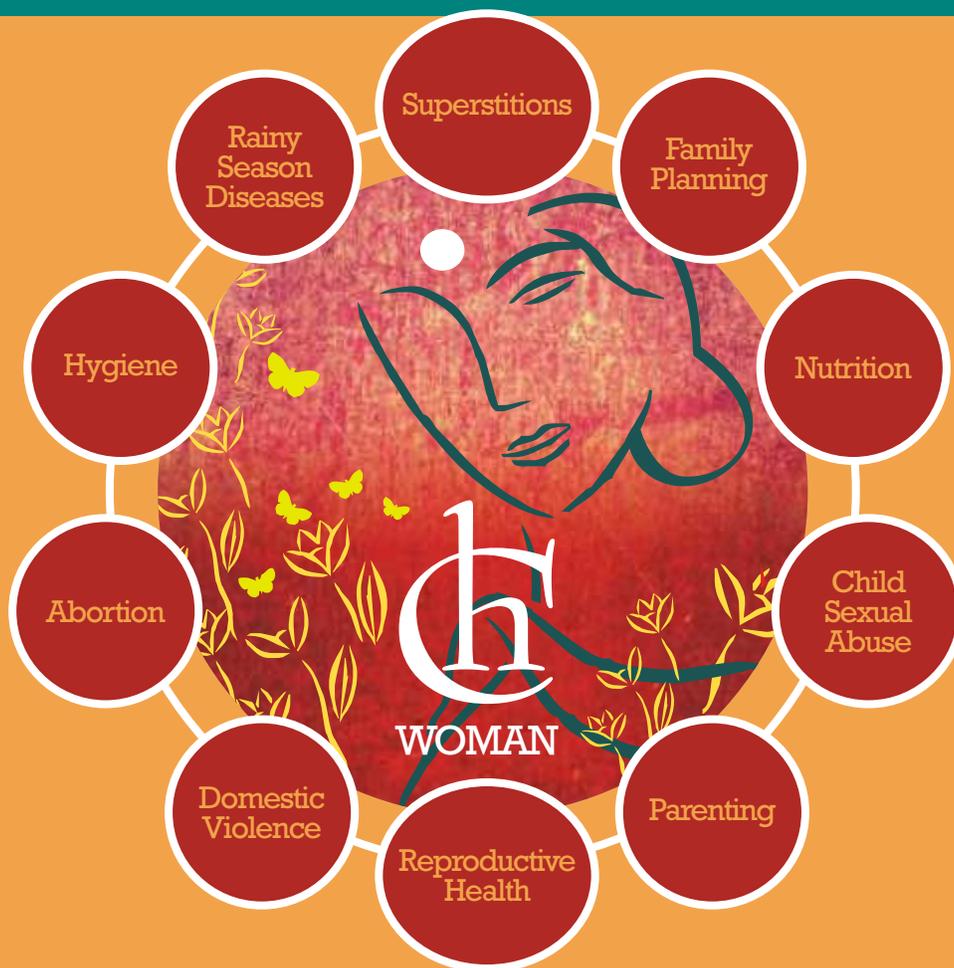
Good health among women and children is given a top priority at Creative Handicrafts and to ensure that women who are part of CH and children from Crèche, Bal Vikas Kendra and Balwadis are periodically provided with medical checks to ensure they are in good health. We also hold various awareness programs on health issues with the women and children. This year we held 7 Health Check up Camps in collaboration with Holy Spirit Hospital in Crèche, Bal Vikas Kendra and Balwadis at different locations. A total of 4 Eye Check up Camps were organized in collaboration with Sion Government Hospital for women and children. After the camps, proper follow up was also done by the social workers of the patients who needed special medical attention.



Gender Justice

Trainings conducted for women

For a woman to grow from strength to strength it is not enough that she grows only economically but in her social understand as well. For this purpose several training were organized in the past year.





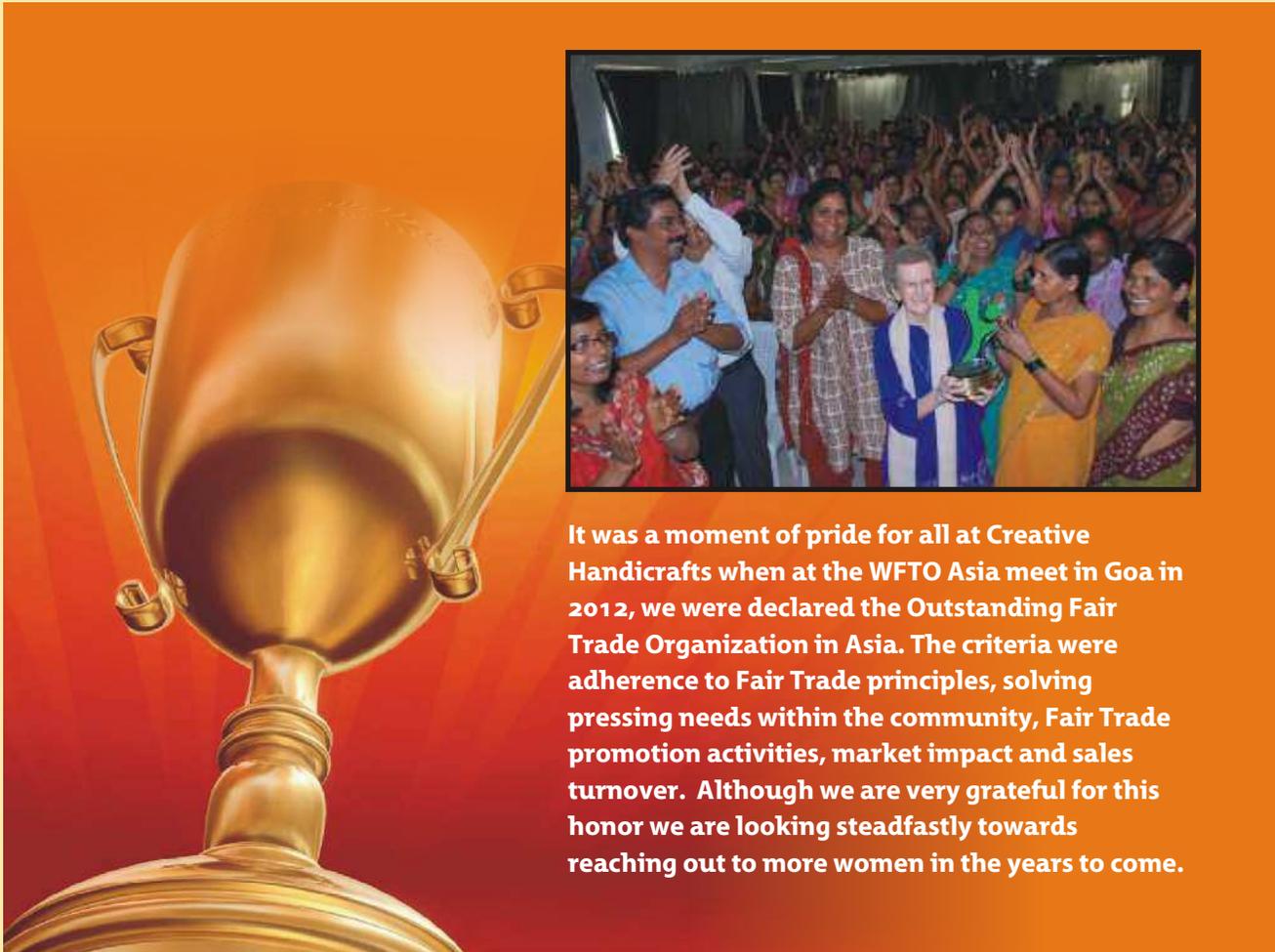
It doesn't matter who you are, or where you came from. The ability to triumph begins with you. Always.

Oprah Winfrey



Awards

Best Fair Trade Organization in Asia!!



It was a moment of pride for all at Creative Handicrafts when at the WFTO Asia meet in Goa in 2012, we were declared the Outstanding Fair Trade Organization in Asia. The criteria were adherence to Fair Trade principles, solving pressing needs within the community, Fair Trade promotion activities, market impact and sales turnover. Although we are very grateful for this honor we are looking steadfastly towards reaching out to more women in the years to come.

sales of products in creative handicrafts for the last 3 years (in Rupees)

Year	Domestic	Exports	Total
2012 - 13	43,53,958	6,00,45,725	6,43,99,683
2011 - 12	42,76,326	7,28,18,601	7,70,94,928
2010 - 11	23,03,665	6,33,11,354	6,56,15,109

Looking into the future

It is important to look behind while looking into the future. Creative Handicrafts has been on the rise in all the areas of its work since they 2000. The sale has been on the rise, the number women benefitting has been steadily increasing and the social workers have been striving to provide help to more and more children and women. The sales report of the concluding year suggests that there is a decline in the sales by 15% which is worrying us. A 15% decline has serious effect on our financial sustainability and our ability to provide work to more women who are knocking at our doors. Many a reason can be attributed to this slow down. However, the fact is that, we cannot afford a slow down.

As a result, Creative Handicrafts will be looking into the domestic market to beat this slow down. The plan is open retail outlets in Mumbai during the current financial year to increase sales. It will look at confirmed markets share like the uniforms for schools. It has started with one school on a pilot basis and will approach more schools.



**Creative Handicrafts
would like
to thank
all its
partners
and
collaborators**

Ananda Pascual Co.
Artisan Du Monde – France
Altraqualita - Italy
Bibico - UK
Castilla y Leon - Spain
CCFD – France
Charity Alive Foundation – USA
Comunidad de Madrid – Spain
CTM Altromercato - Italy
Earth Divas – USA
El Puente – Germany
Fair Trade Company – Japan
Fung Shing – Hongkong
Greymarket – U.S.A.
Enfant Du Monde – France
Fair Trade Forum India – India
Fluffy Duck - USA
Hoss Intropia -Spain
Intermon Oxfam – Spain
James Percy Foundation – Andorra
Les Amin De Jnn – France
Marigold – USA
Mata Traders – USA
Missionaries of Christ Jesus – India and Spain
Monoprix – France
Modcloth – U.S.A.
Mumbai Smiles - India
Munduko Deiak – Spain
People Tree - UK
Pueblos Hermanos – Spain
Serrv - USA
Setem – Spain
Sisam - Japan
Society of the Divine Word – India
Solidar Monde – France
Ses Barques de Formentera – Spain
SIGNAETHIQUE - France
Traid Craft – U.K
Tramundi - Spain
Tuck Tuck Community S. L. – Spain
Twine – Taiwan
Van Guard - Taiwan
WFTO – Netherlands
WFTO Asia – Philippines
Young Caritas – Italy
Yuan Mei Handbags CO.LTD - Japan
and many individual collaborators

Governing Board



Beula Jose



Ms. Elizabeth Poojari
Secretary



Ms. Pamela Fernandez
Treasurer



Tangarani Nadar



Sr. Jacinta



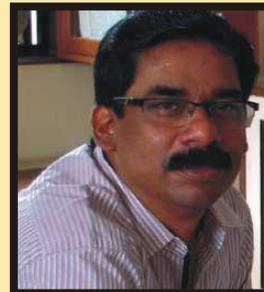
Laxmi Degvekar



Lalita Pawar

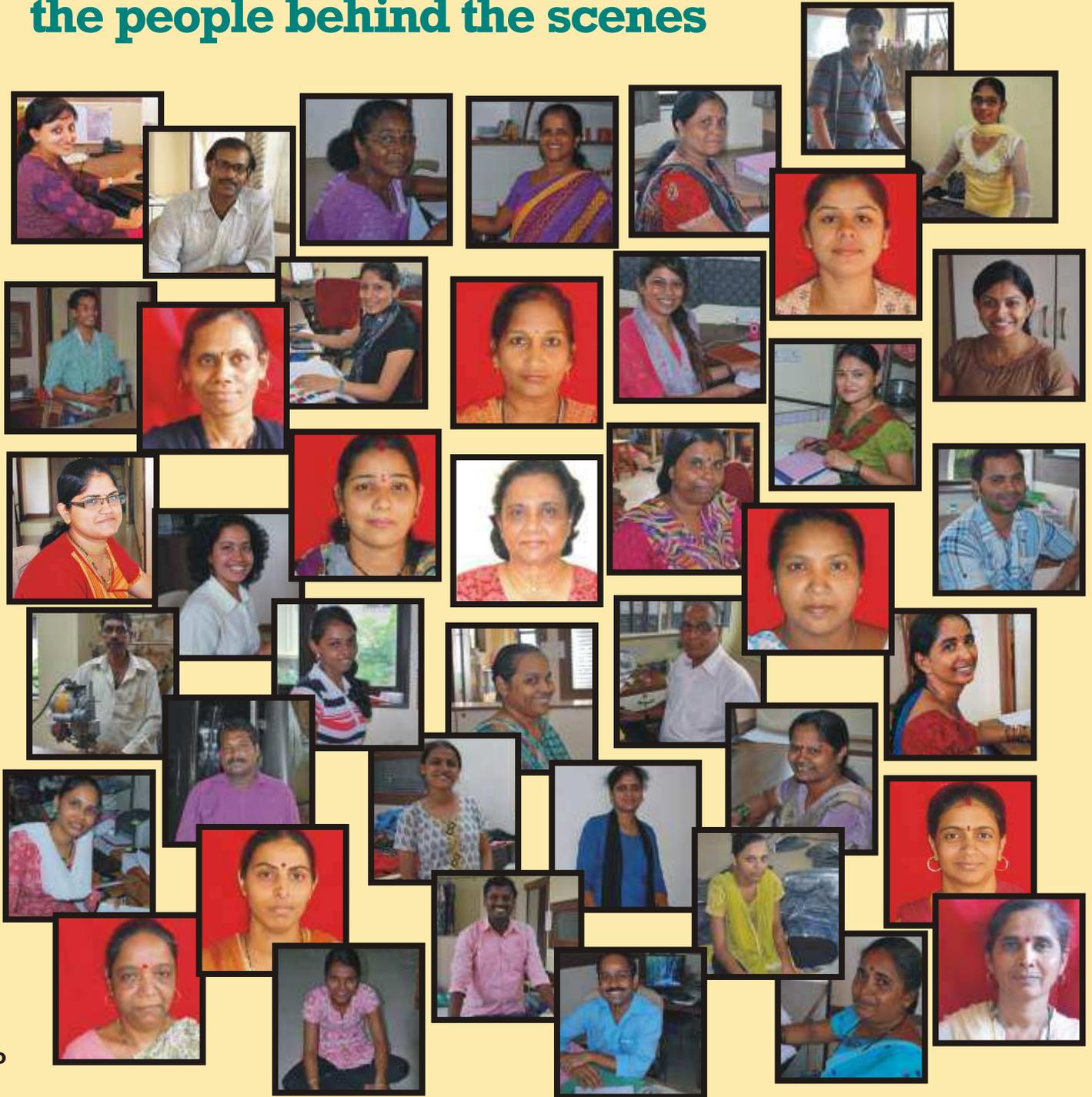


Mr. Josantony Joseph
Member



Mr. Johny Joseph
Executive Director

the people behind the scenes





Creative Handicrafts

Women's self employment center

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**A woman is the full circle.
Within her is the power
to create, nurture
and transform.**

Diane Mariechild

