



TEN THOUSAND  
VILLAGES®

March 2017

IN THIS ISSUE

## International Women’s Day was March 8<sup>th</sup> - Celebrating Women Makers

*From the women of Fair Trade*

From our blog, Alex Shave writes:

### Building a Grassroots Women’s Movement in Rural Bangladesh

On International Women’s Day, we celebrate advancements made towards gender equality, while also recognizing that there is still a long way to go. At Ten Thousand Villages we believe that by economically empowering women in disadvantaged parts of the world, we help level the playing field. Freedom to make one’s own financial decisions is the first step towards self-determination, and can be the first step towards lasting grassroots change.

Recently, Tanu Dey, Director and CEO of Dhaka Handicrafts in Bangladesh visited our head office to talk about how this is working on the ground in rural Bangladesh. Ms. Dey told us that while the capital city is rapidly modernizing, the rural areas are changing much more slowly. We asked her about some of the work that Dhaka Handicrafts is doing to help Bangladeshi women.

### EDUCATION

Education subsidies for students, especially girls, are a major part of Dhaka Handicrafts’ social mission for a practical reason. In Bangladesh, the best chance a girl has to break the cycle of poverty comes from having a good education. So besides paying a fair wage to makers, Dhaka also invests in their kids. Tanu explains, “For girls in Bangladesh, until college, school is free. However, what isn’t free is the grade 10 standard exam that students need to pass if they want to get into college. So we pay 50% of that fee for the girls. When they go to college [equivalent to grades 11 and 12], there is an admission fee. Of that fee, we pay 50%. If they wish to continue to university, we pay 50% of that, too.”

In addition, Dhaka also gives students attending college and university a small monthly allowance, enough for pens and paper, so that the students can go to class with everything they need to learn.

*Continued on page 3...*



Don’t forget about World Fair Trade Day May 14th

Celebrate Fair Trade with us in-store!



Find out the results of our sock sales for 2016!

Supporting tree planting, fighting hunger, helping AIDs victims... achievements with every sock!



We have FUN! Shopping fun. Check out the spring product

Everything you could ask for in-store at a reasonable fair-trade price

Get a head start on your growing season with our new spring products! We have planters, along with other beautiful items, all ready for you to adorn your home with.

**Terracotta Porch Planter \$34.00** This lovely planter will wow all your mates, wherever you choose to put it. Comes in both a medium and large size, with a base to keep your water from escaping somewhere you don't want it to escape to! From the makers of Corr-The Jute Works. Corr is 4000 members strong, throughout 154 rural communities. And all artists are female.



on the intended their skill



**Burst of Birds Batik Napkins \$6.00** This reusable napkin will allow you to look fashionable at any dinner party. Batik painting involves tracing a pattern onto a material, then placing hot wax design, then dyeing the material. The wax is later removed and the artist is left with their design! Prokritee (meaning "nature") gives women in Bengal a chance to earn a living, expand base, and provide for their families.

**Frog Terracotta Planter** Bangladesh use molds to the fall to ensure it lasts Jute Works



**\$10.00** This adorable creature would be happy in or outdoors. Makers in bake the clay in first, then sand and whitewash to finish. Just be sure to bring it in into the next spring season. Another great design from the ladies of Corr-The



**Aqua Pheonician Glass Pitcher \$69.00** It's a secret family recipe that makes these pitchers appear so sleek and graceful. The secret is glass is blown and spun on a metal tube, but the key is skilled Palestinian crafters. The glass used is recycled and lead-free. The crafters are from Hebron Glass-West Bank. Hebron Glass hails all the way back to 1890, and now has 60 artisans in its membership.



**Bird Buddies Bird Bath \$24.00** The birds on your front porch will be uber excited to dive bomb themselves into this work of art. You may not want to let them! The entire thing is made of metal, with a layer of robin's egg blue then grey, to create a distressed look. Thanks to the artists of Noah's Ark International for working so hard to get this piece ready for us at TTV. Noah's Ark was established by Christian businessman, Samuel Masih. Three hundred full-time artisans now work with Noah's Ark creating metal and wood crafts, cutlery, handmade paper, bone and horn items, jewelry and textiles.



**Whitewashed Mango Wood Jewellery Box \$36.00** Hand-carved mango wood makes any jewelry shine. This box hides 3 compartments for all your sparkly accessories, and even the one that don't sparkle! Mango wood is soft enough that special tools aren't needed, but tough enough to hold up for the long run. Yet another beauty by Noah Ark's International artists.



**Moroccan Hand Sewn Cut-out Cushion \$29.00** This cotton pillow has an intricate cut-out pattern stitched to a whole first layer. The artists took time ensuring that each hole in the cut-out was fastened sturdily so there would be no gaps in the material—or in your life after you purchase it! Also created by Noah's Ark International.

**Warrior** day to feel Kisii and is by



**Stone Kisii Sculpture \$18.00** This beautiful piece will remind you of how hard you work every great, exercising your body and mind. Modelled after the yoga warrior pose, this stone is called hand-carved and waxed to perfection. Made by artists from Undugu, which was founded in 1973 Tanzanian priest Arnold Grohl.

*\*And believe us when we say there's even more than this to check out. Come down and see for yourself!*

International Women's Day blog entry continued...

Thanks to these benefits, one daughter of a producer is in school now to become a nurse. A few more are

pursuing other fields in university, while many are working their way through college.

Dhaka Handicrafts sees this investment as non-negotiable. Tanu says, “No matter whether we are making profit or loss, our education fund is always there for the kids. Last year we had a loss, but their education will continue no matter what. That’s a promise we made.”



### GENDER AWARENESS TRAINING

Education is a way to help the next generation, but Dhaka is also working to help the artisan women they work with today by offering annual training.

Certified Gender Awareness training programs are very expensive, so instead of sending all artisans to the NGO-led programs, they sent their office staff, so the staff can then lead sessions for the home-based makers.

The program used to be only taught to women, but according to Tanu Dey, this method didn’t work. Women would return home to their husbands, only to have the new knowledge met with resistance and violence. So now husbands and wives take the training together - and the change is making all the difference.

Tanu told us that a few years ago at the training, the husband from one couple refused to take part in a role-reversal skit, where the husband and wife were to play each other. He vehemently refused to do it under any circumstances. So Tanu said “fine,” and they moved on.

Afterward, she quietly took the man aside and asked “Why aren’t you doing this?”

He replied, “Now, after this training session, I know how much damage I do. And I don’t want the same treatment from her.” If there was any doubt that the training was working, it disappeared after this moment.

### THE ROAD FORWARD

Every year, Dhaka has a producer meeting, with 4 or 5 women representing each producer group. In that meeting, women’s empowerment is a primary topic. A lot of these women are uneducated, and many were married years before they turned fifteen. They regret not being able to go to school, but today, they’re giving that opportunity to their own kids. Mothers are no longer forcing daughters to marry young. Tanu is happy to see this kind of progress, but says that it’s not always better if things move too quickly. In rural areas, it’s important to be careful to avoid upsetting the community. Lasting change has to emerge organically.

“With a lot of precaution [at the women-only producer meeting], we work, and we talk. And it’s



working, because the women are becoming empowered now. They have the earnings - we do our best to give them work throughout the year, so now the

society, the family, everybody is respecting the women. You can see it.”

Tanu Dey continues, “If I think 20 years back, and look at today, I can see the difference. I can see that in those days, women used to be so scared to come [to the meeting]. Today, they come. They wear the covering, the hijab, but they come to talk, and fight back. I like that.

## Conscious Step Socks really made an impact in 2016

Ten Thousand Villages brought in these socks last year. Conscious Step socks help **fight hunger** by bringing food packages to malnourished children. They **educate children** in Asia through a program called Room to Read. They help **plant trees** in Kenya through the Trees for Life program. These socks also help **provide HIV treatment** to pregnant women. And they also give 18-months of **clean water** to someone without it through Water.org.



*Our socks are fantastic and you the followers and buyers helped raise funds for all of these causes last year! Here are our results!*



**5200  
SOCKS  
SOLD**

### RESULTING IN:

- 925** weeks of AIDS treatment for pregnant women in Africa
- 6500** meals for hungry children
- 1850** books for schools in Asia
- 18** months of safe drinking water for **1100** people
- 22480** trees planted in Kenya

Thanks for reading this month's newsletter ☺

## Mark the dates!

### Special in-store events

**April 1-15 – Closing out sale – Calgary 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue location. 30% off store wide. Shop early for best selection.**

April 7-9<sup>th</sup> 25% off Home Décor

April 22<sup>nd</sup> Earth Day 10% of all sales donated to Artisan tree planting programs

April 23<sup>rd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Appreciation week

May 13<sup>th</sup> International Fair Trade  
\*Check online and in-store for great savings!

May 29<sup>th</sup> AGM for Global Village Crafts Society – Foothills Mennonite Church

### Off-Site Sales

April 29-30<sup>th</sup> Calgary Garden Show

June 4<sup>th</sup> Lilac Festival



**\*We are closed Good Friday and Easter Monday**

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