



“Design Mentor Chandrashekhar Bheda with Artisan Entrepreneur Basharat and his crew embroidery workshop in Kulgam, Kashmir “

Commitment to Kashmir (CtoK) along with the support of Titan Industries has started **The Inclusive Livelihoods Program Based on Skill Development & Craft Entrepreneurship in the Valley**. The program aims over the next 18 months to use the strengths of each craft community as the key driver to aid the creation and development of 25 small businesses, owned and operated by artisans engaged in the production of traditional Kashmiri crafts. This will be achieved through an innovative and holistic hands on approach comprising of design and product training, skill enhancement, mentoring in business practices, logistics and providing marketing avenues to the 25 selected artisans.



Design Development Workshop in Kashmir

Commitment to Kashmir with the support of Titan industries and its local partner Craft Development Institute (CDI) organised its first Design Development workshop, one among many interventions, from 22nd September to the 4th of October in the valley of Kashmir with the 25 selected lead artisan entrepreneurs along with their associated artisans and CtoKs’ Design Mentors.



The two week workshop aimed towards relationship building between the artisans and the designers also marked the commencement of new theme-based and market-focused product development in textiles and non-textile craft.

Urooj Fatima, Papier Mache Naqash Artisan Entrepreneur

Urooj Fatima is one among the 25 lead entrepreneurs on the Ctok project. Her father Hakim Sahib is a master artisan painter for papier mache. Urooj has always been very keen to grow her father’s papier mache business but because of the worsening situation and limited channels of market she was losing hope in the craft.

Ctok’s Design Mentor, Devika Krishnan’s interaction with Urooj resulted in some fresh ideas of substituting the papier mache painting medium from Sakhta to Channapatna wood. After a few engaging discussions with her Design Mentor, Urooj’s excitement couldn’t be contained and she was ready to take the initial concepts forward in a new direction. Urooj drew patterns, suggested colour combinations and monitored her team. Her curiosity and Design Mentor Devika Krishnan’s ability to nurture collaborative ideas has resulted in the development of a total new range of products including - A set of nesting dolls of Kashmiri women, Beads and pendants with Kashmiri Flowers and Ludo and Knots n Crosses board game boxes based on the theme of Mughal gardens.



Imtiyaz Ahmad Shah, Walnut Wood Craft Entrepreneur

The Commitment to Kashmir project supports a number of start-ups by young entrepreneurs. One such start up is by Imtiyaz Ahmad Shah, an ambitious young man pursuing his masters in craft management at CDI, Srinagar with an interest in developing walnut wood furniture accessories and upcycling of waste wood.

Interactions with assigned Design Mentor Harpreet Padam have resulted in the identification of all the stakeholders in the value chain - a quality carpentry unit, a wood carver and a turner who will support and aid the commencement of product development by the designer and the entrepreneur team. Experiments with the jaali / pinjra were also done to incorporate it into the walnut wood collection.

Design Mentor Harpreet Padam, says, “Imtiyaz’s strength is his ability to quickly develop a network of groups or individual wood workers that he may need. I will be working with Imtiyaz on strengthening his design process in terms of originality, feasibility as well as relevance to the urban Indian markets.”



Upcoming Events:

Workshop -Up skilling workshop on basic construction at NIFT, New Delhi from 13th – 17th November

Exhibition – CtoK to represent artisans at A Hundred Hands Exhibition, Bangalore from 29th November - 3rd December

COMMITMENT TO KASHMIR, (CtoK) is a Delhi based Charitable Trust, launched in 2011. Inspired by the late LC Jain, activist, economist and Gandhian, the CtoK initiative was conceived to support a new generation of crafts persons from Kashmir become independent and sustainable entrepreneurs. Over the 5 years, CtoK has enabled its young beneficiaries to find new opportunities both within and outside the Kashmir valley.