



Keeping Craft Tradition Alive in Ecuador

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In beautiful Ecuador, land of the Andes Mountains and the Galapagos Islands, traditional craft skills have been passed down generation after generation. Many people rely on these traditions to provide for the basic needs of their families. Camari and MCCH, SERRV's two partners in Ecuador, focus on empowering small-scale artisans by assisting them to overcome obstacles and find international markets. SERRV is proud to support the continuation of traditional craft techniques that help these artisan families and communities thrive.

San Antonio de Ibarra is a small village in Ecuador that has a long history of woodcarving, and today a large percentage of the population is dedicated to the craft. Luis Cevallos of Camari owns a workshop called Le Forje, meaning to *shape*, where he and his staff of five young men carve traditional Ecuadoran-style wood figurines. When he has a large order, like the one for SERRV's Ecuadoran Nativity, he employs more carvers from his community and supports up to 10 families.

“Life is one.
What is projected
in your work
is also projected
in your life.”

-Jose Tonello of
FEPP (Camari), Ecuador

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From top left: Hermelina and her sister; Yeliver, a tagua artisan; the preparation of the tagua nut from raw material to final product.

This specific style of carving was passed down to Luis from his father, and his sister taught him the intricate painting technique which is also traditional in this area. “My nativities are a work of art,” Luis says as he carefully paints the floral details on the Ecuadoran Nativity.

The famous, beautiful woven textiles from the town of Otavalo are another craft technique that has been passed down through generations. Hermelina Burga of MCCH belongs to an indigenous family who has been weaving for many years. She shares, “I enjoy the process and I want to continue the tradition, which I learned from my father.” Hermelina and her siblings sell their scarves in the local markets, but prefer the fair income they receive from international orders through MCCH, like the colorful Winterberry Scarf in our Fall Catalog. Color is an important part of life in Otavalo, and is expressed through these vibrant fabrics that she and other indigenous weavers create.



Tagua nut, the native seed used to make our Café Teal Necklace, grows from the Ecuadoran Ivory Palm. It is a fast-growing, sustainable material with a long history of use among indigenous populations for jewelry and medicinal uses. Today, it is a reliable source of income for many small communities in Ecuador, such as Sosote, the village where Yeliver, an artisan with MCCH, lives and runs his tagua jewelry workshop. He can employ 25 people in his community with a large order, and has been able to give his children a good education with the fair income he earns.

“When I visited our partners and several artisans in Ecuador earlier this year, I found interwoven themes of tradition, solidarity, hope, and beauty,” shared SERRV Product Specialist Maria Wood. Keeping beautiful craft traditions alive is an integral part of SERRV’s fair trade commitment, and we are proud to collaborate with our partners and share their rich cultural identity and history that these techniques and materials represent.

Welcome, Steve!

We are excited to welcome Steve Anderson, Director of Product Development and Merchandising, to our staff in Madison, WI. Steve has returned to his home state and brings a wealth of experience in buying, merchandising, and product development from working with a major retailer in New York City.

Steve considers working for SERRV to be his dream job, where he is able to combine his passion for the fair trade movement with his years of experience working within the gift industry. Steve summed it up by saying, “SERRV is made up of a great group of people with diverse backgrounds and experiences, and I’m so happy to be part of a dynamic organization with such a great mission. I can’t wait to see what this team can accomplish next.”



Our Environmental Commitment

Earth stewardship has always been a vital part of our mission and is one of the 10 fair trade principles we adhere to. Our products are made by hand—thus reducing the use of electricity—and the majority are made with local, readily-available natural materials. We’ve created an internal Green Team dedicated to ensuring SERRV is upholding our environmental standards. From reducing waste by reusing packaging, to shipping our handcrafts and foods by sea as much as possible, to using eco-friendly papers and inks, we’re committed to caring for the environment.

Learn more about our commitment at serrv.org/sustainability.

More than survive—thrive

SERRV's commitment to fair trade extends further than paying a fair wage. SERRV also builds the livelihood of our artisan partners by supporting social programs and skills development, and providing financial assistance for new workshops and tools. We provide targeted, direct grants to our partners to assist them in responding to specific local needs. These funds are generated by sales of our products and through generous donations.

In 2007 the members of SERRV partner Nyabigena Soapstone Carvers in Kisii, Kenya founded a school for children in their area. The school now serves more than 200 students and has been recognized as one of the top 20 schools in the region. SERRV raises funds to help purchase school supplies, helping to ensure that vulnerable children can earn an education.

SERRV recently sent a grant to VillageWorks in Cambodia to train 25 new artisans. We have also provided a long-term, low-interest loan to fund the expansion of their workshop so they can offer employment for physically disabled artisans. This project will help more artisans in Cambodia lead healthier lives as they work their way out of poverty through fair trade.



Empowering Women in Nepal



We were thrilled to have Milan Bhattarai join the SERRV Board of Directors this year. Milan is the head of our inspirational partner Get Paper Industry in Nepal, and while he was with us for a recent board meeting we took the opportunity to gather updates about their work in Nepal.

Get Paper Industry (GPI) creates beautiful handmade paper and is passionately committed to a variety of social programs to support their artisans and others who are disadvantaged. Nepal is one of the most impoverished countries in the world, and GPI builds schools, provides scholarships to girls, conducts trainings and more to help people overcome adversity.

One of GPI's programs focuses on eliminating human trafficking—a huge problem in Nepal. This program is centered in the city of Hetauda where trafficking cases are widespread as girls are tricked into false opportunities. The 71 groups of women who participate in the program hold awareness talks, participate in a savings and credit program for education loans, and take classes about personal savings and finances. They can also receive skills training to start their own businesses or prepare them for dignified work. For the past 6-8 months, there have been no cases of trafficking within the groups' networks, as girls in the program are personally empowered and are finding meaningful reasons to stay in their communities.

Milan shared the story of Binu Bista, who is 19 years old. Her mother and father are unable to work due to health problems and her brother ran away from home, leaving her to support the family. Through GPI's program, Binu received a loan and started a chicken farm, which is thriving and providing her with sustainable income. Not only is she able to care for her parents, but she is sending her younger sister to school with the money she earns—an opportunity that did not exist before her involvement with GPI.

SERRV is proud to support the good work of Get Paper Industry. We currently use their handmade paper packaging for many of our accessories, sell their notebooks, and raise funds for their scholarship program.



Eradicating poverty is about education & empowerment.

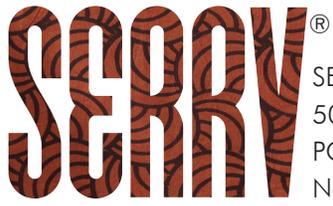
With knowledge and skills, hardworking artisans can develop successful, sustainable businesses that will provide for their families and communities for a lifetime.

Your **tax-deductible*** donation will allow us to support more struggling families in their journey to a better life.

Please support our work today. Donate online at serrv.org/donate or call 1.800.423.0071.

*SERRV is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Visit serrv.org/donate for financial and regulation information.





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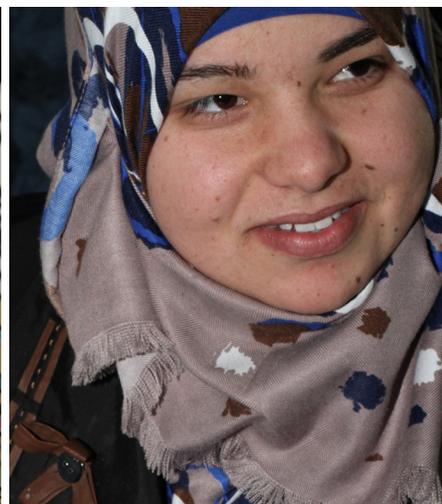
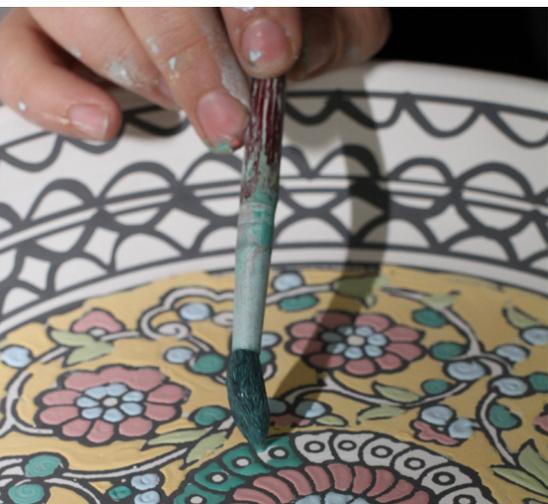
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to eradicate poverty wherever it resides®
 by providing opportunity and support
 to artisans and farmers worldwide

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Beauty from Bethlehem

We are excited to introduce our newest partner, Bethlehem Fair Trade Artisans (BFTA), a nonprofit organization created by Palestinian artisans in the local handcraft community. Over the past few years political turmoil in the West Bank has given artisans more challenges: fewer tourists to buy their products, a limited job market, restricted movement, and a general lack of access to economic resources.

Through BFTA, marginalized artisans in the West Bank are introduced to new markets and offered skills training and other development opportunities. SERRV is committed to supporting artisans in the West Bank who are striving to maintain their beautiful craft traditions while earning a sustainable income.

Look for new, beautiful serving dishes from BFTA in our fall catalog and a special online collection in November!