



SERRV Product Designer Anne Brady (far left) and Pro Bono Designer Dana Morales (far right) with artisans from the Bangladesh Design Camp 2013

## My Story About Creating Change in Bangladesh

I believe designers like me should assume the responsibility of making a difference through meaningful and responsible design, and become instruments for social change. Design should not be about creating empty and superficial products that are produced at the expense of workers' rights and well-being.

This is the reason why an important part of my design practice is to volunteer my skills and time for SERRV. Last year, when I was asked if I would lead a Design Camp in Bangladesh last fall I immediately said yes. At that point I didn't even know exactly where Bangladesh was located on the map! I also did not know that Bangladesh is the 8th most populated country in the world, and at the same time occupies spot 42 on the list of poorest countries according to the UN's 2011 Human Development Report. In the Corruption Perceptions Index, Bangladesh ranks 136 among 177 countries. Sixty percent of the population doesn't have access to clean drinking water, and natural disasters and climate change have taken a toll on the country.

To make things even harder for this young nation and to add to the already unstable

“Through hard work, persistence, courage, and resilience they can make a difference in the lives of hundreds of skillfull artisans.”

- Dana Morales  
Pro Bono Designer

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# A Visit from Nepal

SERRV recently welcomed Sunil Chitrakar, Executive Director of Mahaguthi in Nepal, to our Madison, Wisconsin office. Together with SERRV staff, Sunil and his wife also visited Crossroads Handcrafts of the World, a fair trade store in Illinois, to join in celebration of their 25th anniversary.



## Recovery in the Philippines

When Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippine archipelago in November 2013, thousands died and millions were displaced. It was the deadliest typhoon to ever hit the Philippines and we are grateful that our artisan partners and their families were spared from tragedy.

Our partner Preda Fair Trade took action to raise awareness of the dangers of child abduction, which occurs at higher rates following disasters when families are displaced and children are separated from their parents. SERRV donated funds to Preda Fair Trade to support their on-the-ground efforts towards recovery and protection of children.

Recovery is ongoing in such basic tasks such as removing debris, establishing temporary housing, and rebuilding homes. Humanitarian groups are working hard to provide assistance, but we can also have an impact by purchasing products from Filipino artisans. When SERRV is able to provide more orders, more fair trade income goes into the country and benefits local communities.

Find our products from the Philippines at [serrv.org/Philippines](http://serrv.org/Philippines).

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situation, hartals (political strikes and blockades of rail, roads and waterways) had been occurring almost weekly in anticipation to the January elections. During our two week visit to Bangladesh there were two hartals, each lasting three days. In fact, our travel to and from the airport was in an ambulance for safety. During the first hartal we were in the middle of our four day Design Camp with designers and marketers from four of SERRV's partners that work with artisan communities all over the country. During the second, we visited the partners' facilities and worked directly with designers on product development. We also managed to visit artisan groups in remote areas despite the blockade and the unpredictable situation.

It struck me that during these days, while we were trying hard to do our job along with the artisans and designers, others were trying to create instability in the name of political freedom.

My most profound gratitude and admiration goes out to all of the nonprofit groups that not only provide job opportunities to those in need under fair trade standards but also deliver social programs such as health services, education, training, and microloans. Most important, they provide opportunities to hundreds of impoverished families to improve their living conditions. As a result, families are able to send their children to school and parents have the dignity of a job that provides a living wage and decent working conditions. In addition, unique local traditions and craftsmanship are preserved for generations to come.

SERRV's partners in Bangladesh have proven to be more powerful and effective than their own government.

They demonstrate that despite the instability created by their country's leaders, through hard work, persistence, courage, and resilience they can make a difference in the lives of hundreds of skillful artisans, offering them a better future, breaking the cycle of poverty, and changing Bangladesh for the better.

- Dana Morales  
Pro Bono Product Designer

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# Local Volunteers Inspire our Global Mission

Unpacking palettes to check quality. Affixing price tags. Running a cash register. Hanging signs. Welcoming shoppers. Polishing jewelry. Product photography. Sorting data. Designing products. Media outreach.

These are just some of the many practical tasks that our wonderful core of volunteers donates with their time and skills. In both our New Windsor, Maryland and Madison, Wisconsin facilities, we rely on volunteers to support our mission day in and day out.



Hundreds of volunteers work in New Windsor every year, particularly when we have new shipments arriving that require quality control and tagging. These volunteers range from teenagers in a high school or youth group to retired couples who donate several days at a time. Many of our New Windsor volunteers have been coming for more than 20 years!

In Madison, volunteers primarily assist us in our two stores and at special events. They help with unpacking and displaying merchandise, customer service, promotion, and even fashion shows.



A volunteer in New Windsor recently shared, "I feel it is very important to serve an organization that helps lift persons out of poverty to provide for their families. As a woman I want to help sell articles made by women, who when empowered have a profound influence upon their children and their community. Helping SERRV process handmade items makes me feel that I am a part of this important process from craftsperson to customer."

## Eradicating poverty is about education and 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](http://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](http://serrv.org/donate) for financial and regulation information.

## Giving Farmers a

Female cocoa farmers are given a voice in decisions at Kuapa Kokoo, the farmer's cooperative in Ghana that co-owns Divine Chocolate. Kuapa ensures women are fairly represented on various councils and committees, and encourages them to be strong leaders in their communities. Women are also given the opportunity to participate in special seminars and workshops on nutrition, health, child care, and financing, as well as training on increasing their cocoa yields.

Farmers in the cooperative are finding ways to help each other improve their practices. Together Kuapa and Divine launched the "Kuapa Hour," a popular broadcast radio program. One of the challenges of a cooperative with 65,000 members is to ensure farmers fully understand the benefits of fair trade and Kuapa membership, so elected representatives and Kuapa staff are interviewed as a means to share information. The most popular recent segments allow farmers to call in to ask questions and share best practices and personal anecdotes about their experiences.

Be sure to check out two delicious flavors of Divine Chocolate which feature these social programs right on their wrappers - Milk Chocolate with Toffee & Sea Salt and Dark Chocolate Hazelnut Truffle!





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## OUR MISSION

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

[serrv.org](http://serrv.org)

1.800.423.0071

Connect with us:



## INTRODUCING CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS

Located in Mumbai, India, Creative Handicrafts empowers women by providing them with the means to economic independence. More than 700 artisans are given access to health care, daycare for their children, and savings and credit programs. Last spring Kerry Evans, Senior Product Designer with SERRV, visited their facility. "At Creative Handicrafts, there is a high level of energy and enthusiasm from the staff and sewing workshops as well as the children's educational centers," says Kerry, "I witnessed first-hand how they empower women through employment and social development programs."



*add caption here about  
having new apparel in  
our spring catalog*



Sunita Patel, a tailor with Creative Handicrafts



Kerry examines  
samples of hand- and  
screen-printed textiles



Emily models our new  
Paisley Celebration Dress