



Creative Collaboration at Design Camp

“This trip will help me with my design work.

Before we were only thinking from our perspective, but it’s been very helpful to receive feedback in detail of why the product line will work or why it’s not right for the market.”

– Amruta Sawant, Designer
Asha Handicrafts, India

Last September, SERRV staff welcomed four designers from Asian partner organizations to the US for an intense week-long training on product design for the U.S. market. This is SERRV’s third annual Design Camp, and it is inspiring to hear each year how transformative this experience is for our guests.

Amruta Sawant from Asha Handicrafts in India, Swagata Ghosh from Sasha in India, Tarun Paul from Dhaka Handicrafts in Bangladesh, and Sunita Marajan from Association for Craft Producers (ACP) in Nepal came together to learn from design professionals in the field and participate in presentations and critiques of their own potential product lines. Felicia Zusman, a product designer working with SC Johnson, presented an informative peek on forthcoming color and design trends. At the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), Tim Parsons, a professor and designer, offered critiques on the participants’ design collections, and discussed best practices to design for a client. The guest designers toured

(continued on next page)



Sunita

Swagata

Tarun

Amruta

different Chicago home furnishing stores with SAIC instructor and designer Felicia Ferrone, and also browsed major retail stores to learn a sense of the kinds of products Americans buy for their homes or for gifts. The designers were able to spend time with SERRV staff to brainstorm new product designs and to discuss the obstacles they face designing for an overseas market.

Meet the participants:

Sunita is ACP's head designer in Nepal. She learned how to knit and crochet from her mother, who owns a tailoring shop, and earned a degree in fine arts before joining ACP. She loves working with the women in Nepal to help preserve traditional skills like weaving and pottery, and was excited to share new design ideas when she returned home.

Swagata is the designer for Sasha in India, and this was her first trip to the United States. "Staying in regular people's homes to see how they live, what they use and what they wear was most helpful for me," she shares.

"When I return, I will have a workshop with all of the feedback and the photos that I've taken," says Tarun, designer with Dhaka Handicrafts. "It will give the artisans a better understanding of how to think about these new designs." He found the store visits most helpful, to see what others are doing in terms of innovative product design.

Amruta designs products for Asha Handicrafts in India. She found the trend reports and color palette ideas useful for her future design ideas. "I loved visiting West Elm and CB2, to see the colors and how they display and present their products."

Success from Design Camp 2011

Sumitra Baiju, a designer with Mahaguthi in Nepal who participated in Design Camp 2011, used feedback she received in the training to create a pattern based on traditional Nepali woven rice mats. See the design on their Lokta Notebooks in the Spring Catalog, page 39.



Introducing Ojala, Nicaragua

In impoverished communities throughout Nicaragua, Ojala supports 290 artisan workshops with financial support and new overseas markets for their products. This project is run by Opportunity International in Nicaragua. We are excited to begin a partnership with Ojala this spring.

One of these workshops is run by Maria Jose Lopez (below), who creates stunning woven hammocks. When she was young, Maria watched her mother weave beautiful hammocks in their Nicaraguan home. As an adult, she found herself working long, hard hours at an undergarment factory trying to make ends meet. She decided to take a leap of faith and leave that job to open her own workshop, where she continues the hammock weaving tradition. Now she is able to spend more time with her children while she weaves, and has employed others within her family to help with the work.



Introducing Allpa, Peru

We have recommenced a relationship with Allpa, a well-established World Fair Trade Organization member that for 25 years has supported hundreds of artisans throughout Peru with fair trade values, product development and technological assistance, financial loans, and new market opportunities. Allpa artisans work with various mediums to create jewelry, textiles, chulucanas ceramics, and other home decor items. We are thrilled to offer Allpa items in our new spring catalog.



Introducing Undugu, Kenya

The women of SERRV's new partner, Undugu, have two gorgeous baskets featured in our new spring catalog (pages 26 and 51). Undugu works to provide sustainable market access for disadvantaged artisans, such as the women of Yattra Basket Weaving Group, shown above.

Beth Nzioki (weaving the green basket) has been a member of the Yattra group for thirty years. The basket orders she's received over this time have enriched her life, she says, because they have given her an income in addition to what she makes by selling vegetables and charcoal.

Fair Trade Member Organizations

SERRV is a founding member of both the North-American Fair Trade Federation (FTF) and the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), originally known as IFAT. Membership in either organization requires a 100% commitment to fair trade principles and practices. Currently, SERRV staff serve on the boards of both organizations.

Both the FTF and WFTO will host member conferences this spring, which SERRV will attend. We will tackle issues that are relevant to all members including labeling, strategic planning, and growth.

To learn more, visit www.fairtradefederation.org and wfto.com.

Threads of embroidery and dreams

Thousands of women in Afghanistan and refugee camps in Pakistan earn a steady income from their beautiful embroidery work, thanks to SERRV's new partner, Zardozi. The organization assists women with finding market opportunity whether in their Kabul shop or for export.

The embroiderers, who are mostly illiterate and live in isolated rural areas, describe this work as life-changing. With their own income, the women have achieved status as individuals within their families and communities, and have become empowered to make their own decisions.

Masooda Wahab is an Afghan refugee living in Pakistan. She has seven children who walk one hour each direction to school and some work afterwards to help cover their school fees. Her husband is blind and is unable to find work. "Without this job, life would be really difficult," Masooda explains. "Zardozi is for women like me and the working atmosphere makes me forget my worries for a while. I dream of giving my children a good education so they can have better lives, buying a small house, and finding the best medical treatment for my husband."

Look for Zardozi items on pages 29 and 43 of our new spring catalog!



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 with practical training like our annual **Design Camp** and partnerships with women's organizations like **Delta Survie** in Mali.

Please support our work today. **Donate online at serrv.org/donate**, mail your donation, 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 www.serrv.org/donate for financial and regulation information.



SERRV International
 500 Main Street
 PO Box 365
 New Windsor, MD 21776

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OUR MISSION

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

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Connect with us:



Connecting with
 Mothers in Mali

SERRV has a direct connection with women in Mali through our partner, Delta Survie. By visiting Delta Survie's women's clinic and working with their handcraft program, SERRV staff, freelance designers, and board member Julie Danis have strengthened these relationships. Our thoughts are with these women and their families during this time of civil unrest.

In response, we have invested in special orders of Delta Survie jewelry to provide the women with desperately-needed income now, and we have committed to build new huts for them to live in while they recover from corrective fistula surgery.

You can help by shopping our new online-only Delta Survie necklace collection or by making a tax-deductible donation to help build new huts at serrv.org/DeltaSurvie.

