



Focus on
Craftwork

GEN, a Grassroots Empowerment Network working with local NGOs and the most disadvantaged villagers to contribute to the elimination of poverty in the Alwar District of Rajasthan State, India
<http://www.gen-initiative.org/>

Welcome to issue 13 of the GEN News. This edition focuses on the work of the GEN / End Poverty partnership to develop craftwork as a source of income for villagers in the Tijara Block in Rajasthan.

Photo on R – Women and the products they make at one of the craft centres in the village of Shekhpur.

How did the craftwork project start?

The GEN/End Poverty craftwork project began in 2010 when a GEN / EP team was visiting one of the Tijara villages and saw a traditionally designed quilt hanging on a line. This led to a decision to check if the women would be interested in making handicrafts for income generation. GEN provided a grant of just £300 to buy materials and sewing machines and pay a seamstress teacher to guide the first small steps in production. She taught a small group of women to make small pouches. Since then new seamstresses have been brought in. Two friends of GEN have also run design workshops in Tijara based on feedback from purchasers.

How has it developed?

By 2015, the craftwork project had expanded to 8 craft centres, based in villages spread across the Tijara area. The work of each craft centre is managed by a Craft Centre Coordinator. More than 80 women are regularly engaged in producing a growing range of traditionally designed items for sale in India and elsewhere in the world. Over 100 women have been trained to date and more are asking to join the programme. Following a visit by several seamstresses from the villages to a handicrafts factory near Gurgaon, Mrs Kaur, company director, selected and



trained two women to work on her products in their home area. She will provide them with high quality sewing machines.

The product range

The product range currently comprises: shoulder bags (triangular or square), shopping bags, pouches (in various sizes and shapes, to fit passports, phones or cameras), quilts, table cloths, cushion covers and yoga mats. New products are being added to the range from time to time. The most recent addition to the range is bags for tablets. EP is also working on a 'festive range' of products.

How is the craftwork being sold?

The craftwork is being sold both in India and overseas. In India, sales have been made through the online platform 'Jabong'. Other Internet outlets are being explored. Sales are also being made through exhibitions at craft fairs and at the premises of companies in the area. Additionally, an Indian company which recently placed orders for 500 shoe bags per month has increased its order to 1,000 bags per month. In the UK and other European countries, supporters sell the products through exhibiting at craft fairs and festivals, holding 'pouch parties' and in other ways. **Are you looking for Christmas presents and/or festive bags? See the catalogue and price list overleaf, and contact us!**



Quilt design from Dina ki Dhani village



GEN craftwork stall at a London festival

Please support the work of GEN and EP with a donation to <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/GEN>



Tijara Handicrafts Price List



Helping women in rural Rajasthan earn a modest income

Shoulder bags
– square,
quilted



£10 each or
2 for £17

Shoulder bags
– triangular,
quilted



£10 each or
2 for £17

Shopping bags
– square,
unquilted



£5 each or
2 for £8

Larger
pouches –
passport size



£4 each or
3 for £10

Draw-string
pouches



£4 each or
3 for £10

Smaller pouches
– phone or
camera



£3 each or
3 for £7

Also available: quilts (from £45), table cloths (£12), cushion covers (£5), Yoga mat bags (£8)
www.gen-initiative.org Contact Sue on SPBurke@aol.com for supplies or more information.