

Prayers from Fair Trade Partners: Asha Handicrafts Association



CCOW is delighted to share with you some prayers sent to us by the Asha Handicrafts Association, one of the largest of India's Fair Trade Organisations. Immanuel Bundellu writes of Asha's work: "We seek to demonstrate the love of God through our words and deeds." Asha has provided a summary of its activities (on the reverse of this page); find out more about them at www.ashahandicrafts.org.

Prayers for the work that the producers are doing

Scripture Readings: Micah 6: 6-12; Deut. 10: 12-22; Leviticus 19:35-37; Deut. 10:17-19

"O Lord we pray for the various projects and programmes conducted by the Fair Trade Organisations to express your concern for the poor and the marginalised people groups across the face of this earth. We seek your blessing on the personnel and staff that co-ordinate, manage and minister, that you will meet their needs and enable them to see the fruit of their labour."

"We pray for your protection on the staff working at the grass root level to empower the women and children through education and economic activities. We ask that you protect them from bodily harm from vested interest groups."

"We pray that you will empower and enable the field workers representing Fair Trade Organisations to withstand the social and psychological pressures exerted by those who oppose your will and purpose to care for the poor and down trodden."

Scripture Readings: Job 31:32; Leviticus 19:32-33

"We pray for those who demonstrate your concern and love to the foreigners living as refugees in camps by providing them income through Fair Trade, that you will provide them with financial support to enable them to take care of the practical needs of the people whom they serve. "

Prayer for the whole enterprise of Fair Trade

"We pray for individuals and organisations involved in serving the poor through Fair Trade, that their efforts would be blessed with success and their fruit would remain in the form of impact on individual lives and that of their communities."

Prayer for protection of Intellectual Property Rights

"O Lord we pray that you will enable us to get due recognition and value for the original designs and products that you enable us to create."

"O Lord we thank you for making us the light to the world and the salt of the earth. Strengthen us so that we would not hide our light from the people of the earth but instead lead them to glorify Your name, seeing our good works that you have enabled us to perform."

Some prayers that Asha and its producers use

Immanuel writes: "At Asha Handicrafts Association we pray for our producers, that they would deliver quality products to us on time."

And he proposes a prayer to be used as a thanksgiving in a service, following on from the Scripture reading Exodus 31:1-6: "O Lord we thank you for creating us in your image and placing within us, as you did in Bazaliel and Oholiab, the spark of creativity that enables us to produce handicrafts with beauty and utility."



Asha Handicrafts is an Association of professional men and women, formed to offer marketing support to small groups of artisans in traditional centres of Indian crafts.

Beginning in 1975 with a few producer groups, today Asha Handicrafts supports over 50 producer groups with their marketing assistance and product development programmes.

Asha Handicrafts is one of the pioneering Fair Trade organisations in India. The impact of their commitment to Fair Trade is seen in their relationship with producer groups, which in most cases, extends to more than two decades. Many of the older groups have been built up by Asha Handicrafts to provide regular work for a number of artisans specialising in their crafts.

Asha Handicrafts is a not-for-profit Association and the surplus earned from Fair Trade is used to run programmes and projects that benefit the artisans, their families and their communities.

Their welfare projects include a Primary Health Centre in Saharanpur for the community of wood workers, a computer academy in Agra for children of the artisans and their friends in the community.

Non-formal education programmes are conducted for the children of the artisans in various craft centres, along with free tuition projects for school children who need special coaching to keep up with the rest of the class.

Asha's welfare workers, who live in different centres of crafts, conduct awareness programmes on health, social issues and human rights for women of the artisans' families and those of the community. They seek to empower women through the formation of Self Help groups that impart values, literacy, marketable skills and leadership training.

CCOW is grateful to Immanuel Bundellu at Asha Handicrafts Association for providing these materials, and to Carol Wills for putting us in touch with Immanuel.