

# Better Lives Through Artisananship

Handmade apparel and home goods collections created in India by women entrepreneurs

Industree Producer Transform Products & Stories 2017



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# Who we are

I'm Aneesha.  
I support my  
family  
financially.

I am Jacklin,  
I help put my  
sister through  
college

I am Shirley.  
I run my own  
production line.

I'm Usha,  
and I helped  
design this  
product.

My name's  
Meena.  
I train  
women in  
production.

# What we do

- Design with our customers' needs and aspirations in mind
- Manufacture using ethical processes
- Make products with consciously sourced raw materials, including banana fibre
- Hand craft with cultural traditions in mind
- Create unique and beautiful products for everyday use

# The producer enterprises



Ektha Apparel is a Bengaluru-based **producer-owned** social enterprise incorporated in 2013, creating contemporary ethnic clothing and accessories. The 150 producers all have an **equal stake** in the company. As owner-members, they have access to increased finance, training, social security, childcare, and other more. More than **90% of the members are women**, with a significant number of them in supervisory and managerial positions.



Bangalore Greenkraft is a Bengaluru-based, producer-owned social enterprise that create **lifestyle and home accessories** made from **natural fibres**, primarily banana bark and river grass. Of the 1,700 owner members in the company, more than **80% are women**, with a significant number of them in supervisory and managerial positions. As members of a producer company, they have access to increased finance, training, social security, childcare and other benefits.

# Incubated by Industree



Industree Foundation is a non-profit trust with a mission to organise women micro-entrepreneurs into producer-owned enterprises. International market access is facilitated by Industree Producer Transform Pvt. Ltd., an umbrella Producer Institution. Integrating these enterprises into global supply chains leads to increased, sustained incomes. This ecosystem empowers women both economically and socially to become leaders and to take charge of their own destinies.

Industree has successfully incubated two producer enterprises, Bangalore Greenkraft and Ektha Apparel, by initially providing them with design inputs, training and skilling and a professional management layer. This support enabled these producer companies to become profitable within five years of inception.

The products featured here are a testament to the women who made them. Every item contributes to improving the lives of women in India's creative manufacturing sector.



# Empowering women through Social Entrepreneurship

Incubating and accelerating producer companies owned by women

## Bringing women to the fore:

- Empowers women to achieve gender parity
- Eliminates forced labour
- Puts more income in the hands of women, leading to better health and wellbeing and quality education for their families
- Women in leadership roles influence the policies at the enterprise level and protect the rights for women
- Decision-making power at work translates to more say at home



*The Social Entrepreneurship model fulfills the fifth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of Gender Equality*





# From tailor to trainer

## Kamarunnisa's story

### Kamarunnisa, Trainer, Industree Skill Transform Pvt Ltd

Born and raised in a simple family, I began working at the age of 17 as a tailor for a big garment manufacturer. For 10 years I worked at the same job with erratic hours and no potential for growth. The long hours were a hindrance and my family began to object to my work.

I heard about Industree through a friend and joined a producer company facilitated by them. I joined as a tailor and within 3 months I was promoted to the level of Sample Tailor (where I learnt how to produce an entire garment). Industree Foundation provided training opportunities and I also learnt management skills and was soon promoted to Supervisor.

Today, three years into my association with Industree, I work as a trainer, teaching other women how to be efficient supervisors. I have also been given training in computer applications and assist with administrative tasks, including data entry work.

The Foundation provides a safe environment to grow and learn. Every employee has an 8-hour workday contract and is provided with a pickup and drop-off transportation service. Everyone is respectful of each other. Management encourages women to join the Foundation, and gives them a regular income and job security – and a better quality of life.

**Seeing myself evolve from a tailor to a trainer has given me a lot of confidence in my abilities. Today, I can take care of my family on my own. My parents now encourage me to work and are assured that I am working in a healthy and safe environment.**

In the future, I plan to open my own boutique. I owe this confidence to my mentor Poonam [of Industree Foundation] who encourages me to show my real potential. I see myself getting married and continuing to grow professionally. But until I find that special someone, marriage can wait!



**“As a woman, the Foundation has provided me with a safe environment to learn and grow!”**

**Kamarunnisa's evolution was made possible by the Women's Supervisory Training Program (WSTP):**

*While almost 90% of the artisans in production centres are women, the supervisors are often men, increasing chances of sexual harassment and abuse. Industree implements the Women Supervisory Training Program (WSTP) to train women to take on supervisory roles and move up the value chain, creating conditions for a healthier workplace.*

# Apparel

## The Aizuri-e collection Value chain story



### Design

The shirt's designer, Neelima, hails from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh and graduated from NIFT in Bangalore. She developed the print design herself and worked with artisans in Bagru to create wooden blocks used to print the fabric.



### Fabric

The fabric used for this garment is a dobby weave which was woven in Bhiwadi, Maharashtra.



### Dyeing & printing

The shirt was dyed in Bagru, Rajasthan with only natural vegetable dyes, using two different techniques: Block printing and Dabu printing.

The intricate art of Dabu printing involves caking the fabric with mud, natural resin and sawdust in the desired pattern before dyeing. Each piece can take up to one week to develop, with the process being repeated several times for every color in the design.

Though most of the indigo used today is synthetic, at Ektha we're still preserving the age-old technique with the use of



100% natural Indigo dye, creating an authentic, eco-friendly and high-quality product.



### Sewing and finishing

This garment was put together by the women at Ektha, a 100% producer-owned company. 40 different pairs of hands worked to put together this garment, from pattern-making to sewing and packaging.

Nine different stitches are used to create the shirt, meaning that the process encourages artisans to learn new skills, helping them move up the value chain.

Producer-oriented policies and extensive quality checking ensures that each product complies with international standards.



*Block printing was developed by Chippa community in the village of Bagru, and has come to signify the cultural heritage and vibrancy of Rajasthan.*



**Product:** Tunic dress  
**Fabric:** Cotton cross  
dobby



**Product:** Block print  
kaftan top  
**Fabric:** Cheese cotton

**Product:** Straight  
trouser  
**Fabric:** Rayon twill



**Product:** Printed  
black long kurta  
and straight trouser



**Product:**  
Sleeveless top  
Block printed stole  
Block printed  
wide-leg trouser





**Product:** Block print Cropped Top  
**Fabric:** Rayon

**Product:** Straight trousers  
**Fabric:** Rayon twill



**Product:** Block print tunic dress  
**Fabric:** Rayon



**Product:** Block print sleeveless crop top  
**Fabric:** Rayon

**Product:** Block print cropped wide-leg trousers  
**Fabric:** Rayon



**Product:** Men's full-sleeve shirt

**Fabric:** Cotton



**Product:** Men's half-sleeve shirt

**Fabric:** Rayon Block print fabric



**Product:** Men's full-sleeve shirt with mandarin collar

**Fabric:** Cotton doobby fabric



**Product:** Men's full-sleeve two-tone shirt with mandarin collar

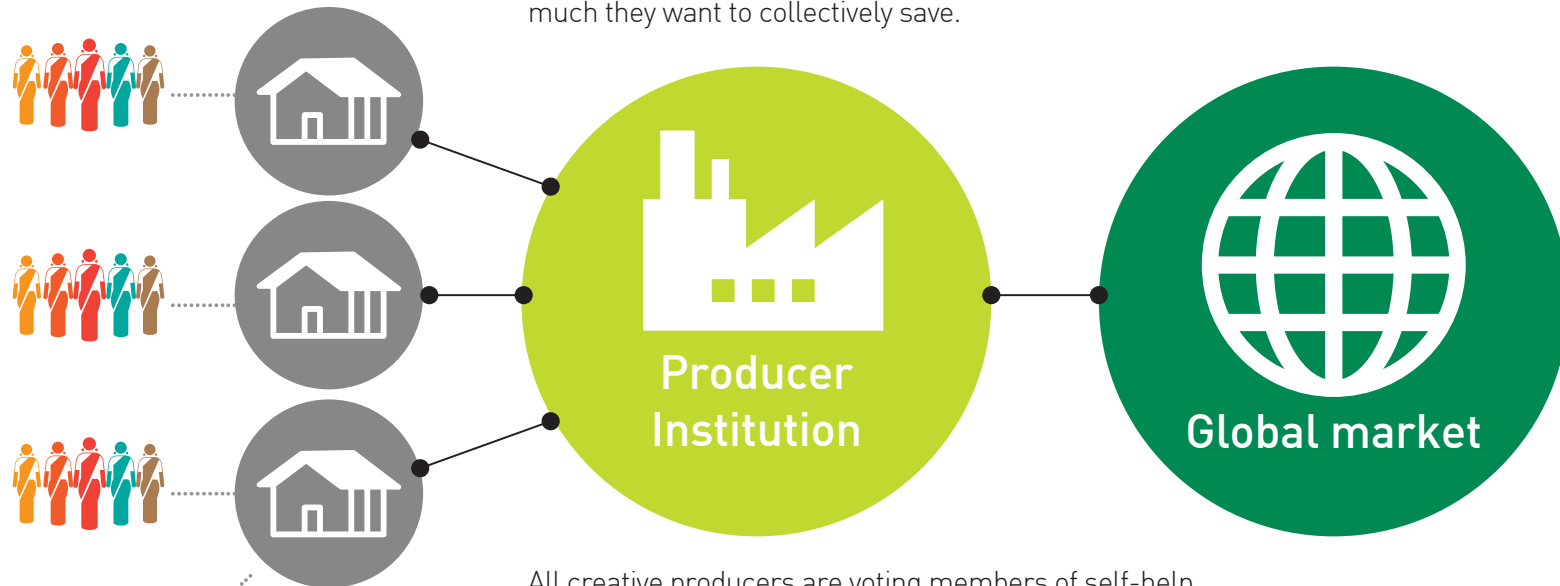
**Fabric:** Cotton





# Social Entrepreneurship: The Self-Help Group model

A self-help group consists of a minimum 5 and maximum 20 creative producers. They elect a leader and create their own rules. Together they can open a bank account and decide how much they want to collectively save.



Self-help  
Groups

Producer  
Enterprises

Producer  
Institution

Global market

All creative producers are voting members of self-help groups and decide together how much money they will collectively save each month and what the money will be used for.

These self-help groups come together to form producer companies like Ektha Apparel and Bangalore Greenkraft, which, under an umbrella Producer Institution such as Industree Producer Transform, have the capacity to fulfill larger orders. This generates **increased incomes and job stability** for the artisans and contributes to the eighth United Nations Sustainable Development goal of decent work and economic growth.



*The Social Entrepreneurship model addresses the fifth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of Good Jobs and Economic Growth*

# From Helper to Supervisor

## Reena's story

Reena, Supervisor, Bangalore Greenkraft Producer Company (BGK)

I work in Bangalore Greenkraft Producer Company as a Supervisor, with a team of 25 people reporting to me. I joined the company 12 years ago as a Helper and today I have evolved to become a Supervisor.

Married at the age of 19, I am the mother of 4 children, 3 girls and 1 boy. I lost my husband to an accident some years ago and I had to learn to provide for my family on my own. Industree Foundation provided me with opportunities to learn and develop leadership skills. This has given me a new sense of confidence.

**Today my entire team respects me and shares all their problems with me. I feel happy when I am able to guide them and they listen to my counsel. We are also one of the high performing teams in the company. We consistently achieve higher production than given targets and have set an example of teamwork amongst all groups. I really appreciate my team's hard work and I feel like they are my extended family.**

Seeing my progress at Bangalore Greenkraft, my daughter has also joined the company. She joined the company as a Helper in my team. I was able to train my daughter and today she is promoted to level of a Tailor. I am very proud of her and I hope she also becomes a supervisor like me in the company... or maybe even higher than me.

Bangalore Greenkraft has a very unique culture. We are supported not just by the Directors of our producer company, but at a community level by our Self-Help Groups and at a local level by the Foundation. This support has enabled women to take charge of things.

Today, I am learning how to speak English better and how to train other women who join the company. I hope someday I will be a Production Manager or a Director, but even if my daughter becomes one, I'll be very happy!



*Industree Foundation provided me with opportunities to learn and develop leadership skills. This has given me a new sense of confidence.*



# Lifestyle products

## From Farm to Fibre: The Banana Rope Value Chain story



After nine months of growth, a farmer can earn about \$1 by selling a banana harvest from one tree, which only gives fruit once. After the harvest, the trees are considered waste material.

But, if the bark from this tree is converted into rope, a farmer can earn an additional \$0.75, nearly **doubling the standard income.**

The bark is peeled and dried, then hand-twisted and woven on a handloom to create eco-friendly products.

**This entire process, from farm to fibre, employs mostly women and villagers in rural areas, increases incomes across the value chain, and reduces waste.**

The women at Bangalore Greenkraft use banana bark and other natural fibres like river grass to create the majority of their products. By creating a market for natural fibre products and converting waste material into useful products, Bangalore Greenkraft is contributing to the twelfth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of responsible consumption and production.



*The Social Entrepreneurship model addresses the fifth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of Responsible Consumption and Production*

# Storage & Accessories

Unique collections hand-created from natural fibres by women-owned producer enterprises. These products can be designed with a range of fabrics for everyday use in all seasons.

## Product

- A-Vanity bag
- B-Runner
- C-Round box
- D-Shopping bag
- E-Photo frame
- F-Storage box
- G-Laundry bin

## Material

Black warp stick banana with printed fabric





# Dining



**Product:**  
A- Runner  
B - Table Mat  
C - Napkin Ring

**Material:**  
Stick Banana &  
Cotton fabric



**Product:**  
A- Runner  
B - Table Mat  
C - Napkin Ring

**Material:**  
Stick Banana cotton  
warp & Cotton fabric

# Storage



**Product:**

- A-Nested Square bin set of-3
- B-Nested round bins set of -4
- C-Rectangle storage bin set of -2
- D-Square small tapered bin

**Material:**

Banana mat,  
with cotton cloth



**Product:**

- A-Shopping bag
- B-Bottle holder
- C-Storage box
- D-Shopping basket

**Material:**

Stick banana



# Storage

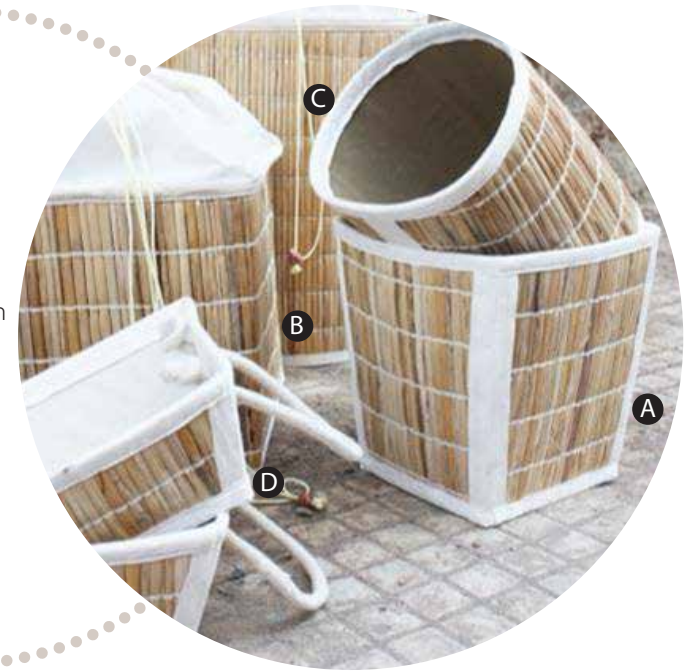


**Product:**

- A- Tapered storage bin
- B-Square cloth closure bin
- C-Round storage bin
- D-Square small tapered bin

**Material:**

Banana mat with cotton cloth



**Product:**

Runner, Table mats

**Material:**

River-grass mat with Zari border

**Product (Right):**

Window curtains

**Material:**

Chamba grass mat

# Storage



**Product:**  
A- Small Banana Basket  
B- Banana Laundry Basket  
C- Stationary box set

# Storage



A



B

C

- Product:**  
A- Stationary storage boxes  
B- Lunch bag  
C- Set of 2 banana stationary trays

# Accessories



**Product:**  
Product: Beach bag

**Material:**  
Shital leaf  
Solid fabric



**Product:**  
Product: Beach bag

**Material:**  
Shital leaf  
Solid fabric

# International quality standards & Compliance with global norms



Ektha Apparel and Bangalore Greenkraft are both IWAY compliant, which means that they follow strict regulations to ensure the safety and wellbeing of creative producers and their families, as well as that of the environment.

We treat our products with equal attention, ensuring that they have consistently high quality and are free from manufacturing defects. A dedicated Quality Checking team inspects every product before it's shipped.

Find out more about IWAY compliance [here](#).



*Our guiding principles when working with environmental, social and working conditions are:*

- *What is in the best interest of the creative producer?*
- *What is in the best interest of their family?*
- *What is in the best interest of the environment?*

# Meet Industree's founder: Neelam Chhiber

Neelam Chhiber is Co-founder and Managing Trustee at Industree Crafts Foundation. For the past three decades, she has been working with artisans in rural and urban areas, by providing design, technical and marketing solutions to bridge the urban-rural divide.

She is a member of the India Design Council and Global Agenda Council, India. She is a board member of Action For India and AIACA (All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association).

***“Our focus is on women, because they are the backbone of the family. If, thanks to these social partnerships, they have a better life and a working environment where they are happy because of the contact with other women, then in the end this has very direct positive benefits for the whole society.”***

*“We are taking a different approach and promoting local, rural employment structures. The women can go about their work in village cooperatives – or in some cases at home – and do not have to travel far to work. We also make sure that there are crèches at the production sites where the children are looked after and educated.”*





# What the women have to say...



**"Women shouldn't depend on their husbands.**

*They should support themselves. I am earning for three people, and taking care of my husband and son."*

Sarina, Bangalore Green Kraft



*"In other companies, managers control the employees. But here at BGK, **we work as a family.** There's a lot of freedom."*

Radha, Administrator, Bangalore Green Kraft



**"Young girls shouldn't stay at home,** because then they won't see what's outside. *The products I create go out into the world and so do I, and this makes me very happy."*

Fatima, Ektha Apparel



**"Women and men are equal.** *We can do the same work."*

Sumina, Bangalore Green Kraft



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