

TITLE

Jewellery production – creating jobs for persons with intellectual disabilities

India: Jhankar

PROJECT SUMMARY

Jhankar is an NGO based in India (Kolkata, West Bengal) that runs a costume jewellery business where the products are designed and produced by people with intellectual disabilities. The project was started by one individual in 2013, and has now grown into a mid-size organization that has created more than 300 jobs so far.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Jobs created in 2014: 20
- Jobs created in 2015: 60
- Jobs created in 2016: 250 to date

PROBLEMS TARGETED

Jhankar believes that the unemployment rate of persons with intellectual disabilities ranges from 70 to 90 per cent in India. These statistics are particularly disturbing in light of the fact that productive work can pave the way for an independent and fulfilling life.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

Jhankar provides skills development opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities and transforms them into entrepreneurs who become socially and economically integrated in their communities. Building on the “fashion for a cause” initiative, Jhankar oversees the making and marketing of costume jewellery and other handcrafted products. It also collects the payments for these products and in turn pays the individual craftspeople. Regular producers of the goods receive a monthly payment; others are paid per product.

Typical customers are boutiques, art galleries, and shopping malls. In addition, there are exhibitions to display the products to potential retailers.

Another sales channel is the Internet. Jhankar has developed a special website where people from all over the world can view the products made by its members, thus creating an opportunity for the craftspeople to interact with their customers and to exchange comments about the products.

Moreover, such feedback enhances the self-esteem of the participants, and promotes the example of an independent lifestyle.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

Jhankar has expanded its activities and now runs two additional centres: in Rupnarayanpur and in North Kolkata. The organization has also increased its marketing network, and now sells to retailers and hotels. Jhankar is currently self-sustaining, but it is unable to scale-up further due to lack of funding.

QUOTE

“As I gained skills to create beautiful jewellery, I gained control over my life. Now I earn money, which gives me the satisfaction of doing something meaningful.”

— Mr. Nusrat Perving, jewellery producer

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