

A close-up portrait of a woman wearing a white hijab and a blue surgical mask. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

2019-2020 IMPACT

Report from the Artisan Alliance

Letter from the Director



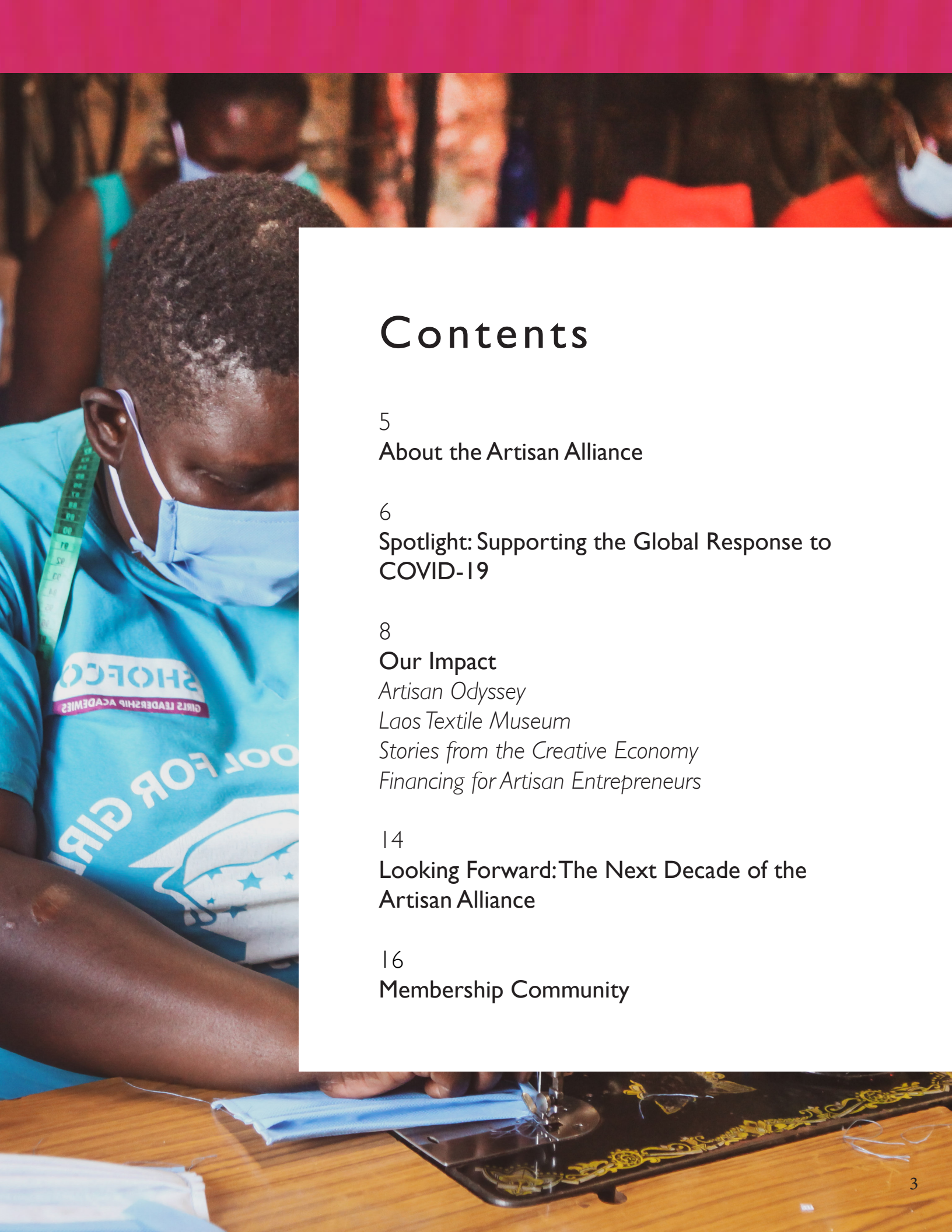
2020 has been a year unlike any other, with a global pandemic raging across every nation; decades-old injustices emerging into broad daylight, and political instability. Economic lockdowns disrupted supply chains, and uneven leadership responses to COVID-19 have hurt many—foremost among them the many small businesses who are the largest employers in every country.

The Artisan Alliance community has struggled—as sales and tourism ground to a halt, so too did work for hundreds of thousands of artisan producers. Ever resourceful, many artisan businesses responded by upgrading their online marketplaces, and some transformed their workshops into needed production of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The Artisan Alliance responded by raising funds to establish an PPE Fund and Producers Coalition, offering small grants to artisan PPE producers. We restructured our artisan business loans to enable longer repayment terms. At the same time, 2020 gave us a moment to reflect on the impact of the Alliance to date, and to craft a strategy for the years ahead. In 2021 we will reveal a new strategy focusing on specialized projects with high impact businesses, refugee enterprises, and women's leadership.

We have been incredibly heartened by the resilience and creativity of Artisan Alliance members, who have risen to the challenge of COVID-19. We are especially grateful for the support of our Advisory Board and donors, who continue to believe in the power of artisan work to connect us to our past while moving us towards a future of dignity and respect for handmade culture.

With gratitude and hope,
Peggy Clark
Director, Artisan Alliance



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**\$526
BILLION**

Estimated value of the global
handicrafts market

About the Artisan Alliance

The Artisan Alliance, an initiative of the Aspen Global Innovators Group at the Aspen Institute, works to unlock economic value in the artisan sector worldwide. The artisan sector is a key driver of economic growth, job creation, and cultural preservation. It is the second-largest employer in the developing world after agriculture, generating incomes and providing important and unique skills development. Artisan businesses help expand opportunity by diversifying and stimulating local economic activity and creating new jobs that can help families and communities thrive.

Founded as a partnership between the Aspen Institute and the US Department of State's Office of Global Women's Issues, the Artisan Alliance has developed a set of tailored programs and a community of more than 200 artisan businesses and partners committed to the sustainable growth of artisan businesses worldwide. The Artisan Alliance envisions a world in which artisans

- particularly women - are fully integrated into global commerce and where increasing revenues flow to artisan producers and communities in need of economic opportunity. We support the power and potential of the artisan sector to create jobs, increase incomes, enhance cultural heritage and promote development that respects the uniqueness of people and place.

Since 2012, the Artisan Alliance has cultivated a learning community of more than 200 artisan businesses and support organizations, increased access to finance through a first-of-its-kind small loan program for artisan entrepreneurs, and provided targeted technical assistance and trainings to artisan business owners across the globe.

The Artisan Alliance offers consumers, retailers, and other artisan businesses with a community of Artisan Alliance organizations that have supported artisan producers in the United States and across the globe. In addition, members can access an expansive set of tools, research, and best practices for artisan business strengthening. The Artisan Alliance also engages specific projects that elevate the importance of the artisan sector, support and grow artisan businesses, and share best practices in a collaborative learning community.



Spotlight:

Supporting the Global Response to COVID-19



With the decline of international travel and a lack of safe employment opportunities for vulnerable populations, COVID-19 has presented immense challenges for the artisan sector across the globe, including a decrease in demand for artisan products everywhere.

In response, in 2020 the Artisan Alliance created the PPE Grant Fund and Producer's Coalition to provide support and resources to small and medium artisan enterprises who are rising to meet the challenge of COVID-19 in their communities.

With funding from the US African Development Foundation, Western Union Foundation, and Resolve to Save Lives/ Vital Strategies, this Artisan Alliance has channelled small grants and technical assistance to producers to expand their PPE manufacturing capacity, train artisans to make PPE, and employ artisans to prepare and respond to the global COVID-19 crisis.

The Producer's Coalition then connects enterprises transitioning to PPE production so they can share advice and technical assistance.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Artisan Alliance partners have employed more than 630 artisans, producing over 582,000 pieces of PPE, including cloth masks, surgical masks, and surgical gowns. To date, the Artisan Alliance has PPE grants to Shining Hope for Communities (SHOFCO) in Kenya, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in Kenya, and RefuSHE in Kenya.



PPE for Africa Grant Fund & Producer's Coalition

- 636 artisans employed
- 582,000+ pieces of PPE produced
- As of November 2020, 3 businesses supported in 2 countries: *Shining Hope for Communities, Kenya; RefuSHE, Kenya; Self-Employed Women's Association, India*
- Artisan organizations producing 20,000+ surgical masks daily
- Plans to grow to 10 countries across Africa
- Growing demand for PPE in Africa, with the continent currently importing 95+% of PPE

636

artisans employed

582k

pieces of PPE
produced

3

grantees

artisanalliance.org/ppe-for-africa

Artisan Odyssey

In October 2019, twelve intrepid travelers embarked on the first Alliance Artisan Odyssey trip to Laos and Vietnam. Designed to be a close-up, unique travel experience, our first Artisan Odyssey trip was a great success. Traveling first to Laos, the group wandered through centuries-old Buddhist temples and parks with an expert guide and traveled by Tuk Tuk to a traditional Laotian cooking class. We spent a day at Artisan Alliance member Ock Pok Tok's weaving center where we learned to spin silk thread and weave on a traditional hand loom beside the peaceful Mekong river.

In Vietnam, the group toured Hanoi's old quarter, visited traditional museums and galleries and the Women's museum. Outside of Hanoi, we spent a magical few days aboard a ship in Halong Bay, dancing on the boat's deck at sunset and kayaking and biking by day among the dramatic limestone peaks arising out of the sea. The Alliance hopes to host more unique, off the beaten track journeys beginning in 2022 to allow friends to experience the Artisan Alliance members up close in unforgettable journeys.

Laos Textile Museum

Fibre2Fabric is a museum and exhibition space situated at Artisan Alliance member Ock Pop Tok's Living Crafts Centre in Luang Prabang, Laos. The museum curates and presents a variety of exhibitions each year, and it includes an extensive permanent exhibition of Lao Textiles. Fibre2Fabric's exhibitions demonstrate the production and cultural significance of textiles from various regions and ethnicities in Laos.

In 2020, the Artisan Alliance launched a partnership with Ock Pop Tok to support the renovation of the museum space to create a sustainable, stable environment for the textile collection and provide technical assistance to catalog the collection. The textile collection is currently housed in an old building that lacks structural integrity and does not provide an environment conducive to textile preservation. Generous donors have provided funding for a feasibility study to assess options for upgrading the museum, which will take place in 2021.



We believe artisan producers
everywhere show us the beauty,
humanity, and resilience that we need
to build on to create a better world.

Peggy Clark, Artisan Alliance, 2020



Making the Case for Refugee Artisan Enterprise

- 68.5 million people displaced across the globe
- 85% of world's displaced population hosted in low-income countries
- On average, a displaced person will spend 20+ years away from home
- 3 businesses studied serving more than 3,500 refugee women artisans: *Indego Africa, Rwanda; RefuSHE, Kenya; Jordan River Roundation, Jordan*
- Refugee artisan partners represent 7+ countries experiencing conflict and crisis: *Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Syria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan*

3

artisan businesses
studied

7

countries
experiencing conflict
represented

3.5k

artisan partners
supported

artisanalliance.org/stories-from-the-creative-economy



Stories from the Creative Economy

Over 68.5 million people are displaced in our world today. 85% of the world's displaced population is hosted in a developing country. On average, those displaced will spend 20 years away from their homes. After leaving everything behind as they flee war, violence, and persecution, the refugee population has the opportunity to participate in meaningful work that has an impact that is far greater than simply reestablishing economic stability. Many refugees hail from communities with longstanding craft traditions and possess unique skills that have been cultivated over many generations. Artisan enterprises are able to support refugees' efforts to rebuild their lives with dignity by incorporating their traditional skills into local and regional value chains, building social cohesion between refugees and their host communities, and supporting refugees as they claim their rights.

In 2019, the Artisan Alliance travelled across the globe to learn more about the social and economic impact artisan work has on refugees. This led to the Artisan Alliance's first set of case studies in the "Stories from the Creative Economy" series. In these three cases, the Artisan Alliance shares learnings from Indego Africa, RefuSHE, and the Jordan River Foundation, three diverse social enterprises working with refugee artisans in Africa and the Middle East.

The Artisan Alliance surveyed program participants, conducted in-depth interviews, and documented the insights of relevant stakeholders from the public and private sphere. While each story is unique, we found many common threads that tie together to create successes working with refugees in the artisan sector. Local staff, the teaching of transferrable skills, psychosocial support, and business and financial literacy training all play a role in the creation of a successful artisan refugee and social enterprise.

It is our hope that these studies build the knowledge base on refugee artisan business and provide actionable new ideas for supporters, investors, and our participating artisan enterprise stakeholders.





\$410,035
RAISED

For artisan business loans



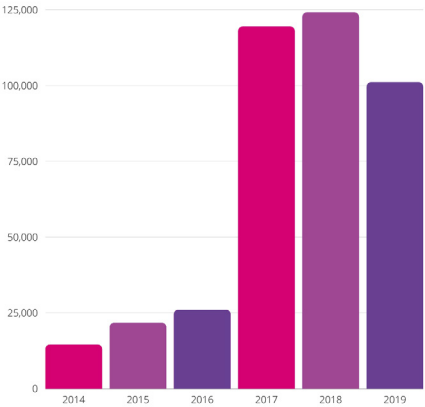
Financing for Artisan Entrepreneurs

In partnership with Kiva, the world’s first online crowd-lending platform, the Artisan Alliance offers tailored artisan business loans up to \$20,000 USD at 0% interest. Artisan businesses are often overlooked by traditional lenders; Kiva allows these entrepreneurs to bypass banks and secure capital to buy raw materials, access international markets, invest in equipment and training, and more.

Since 2014, the Artisan Alliance has funded 44 loans for artisan businesses on the Kiva platform, raising \$410,035 from individual Kiva lenders. In 2019 alone, the Artisan Alliance raised \$101,100 for 10 entrepreneurs on the Kiva lending platform. Together, these businesses support more than 20,000 artisan partners. Loans range from \$8,000 to \$20,000 USD, with an average one-year repayment timeline.

Program participants have utilized loans to buy raw materials, fulfill large purchase orders, construct improved workshops, and attend the International Folk Art Market and other markets and trade shows. Often, loans through the Alliance-Kiva Artisan Loan Program are the only source of financing available to artisan entrepreneurs. Every artisan business loan has been repaid in full.

Artisan Business Loan Funds Raised 2014-2019



artisanalliance.org/loan-program

Looking Forward: The Next Decade of the Artisan Alliance

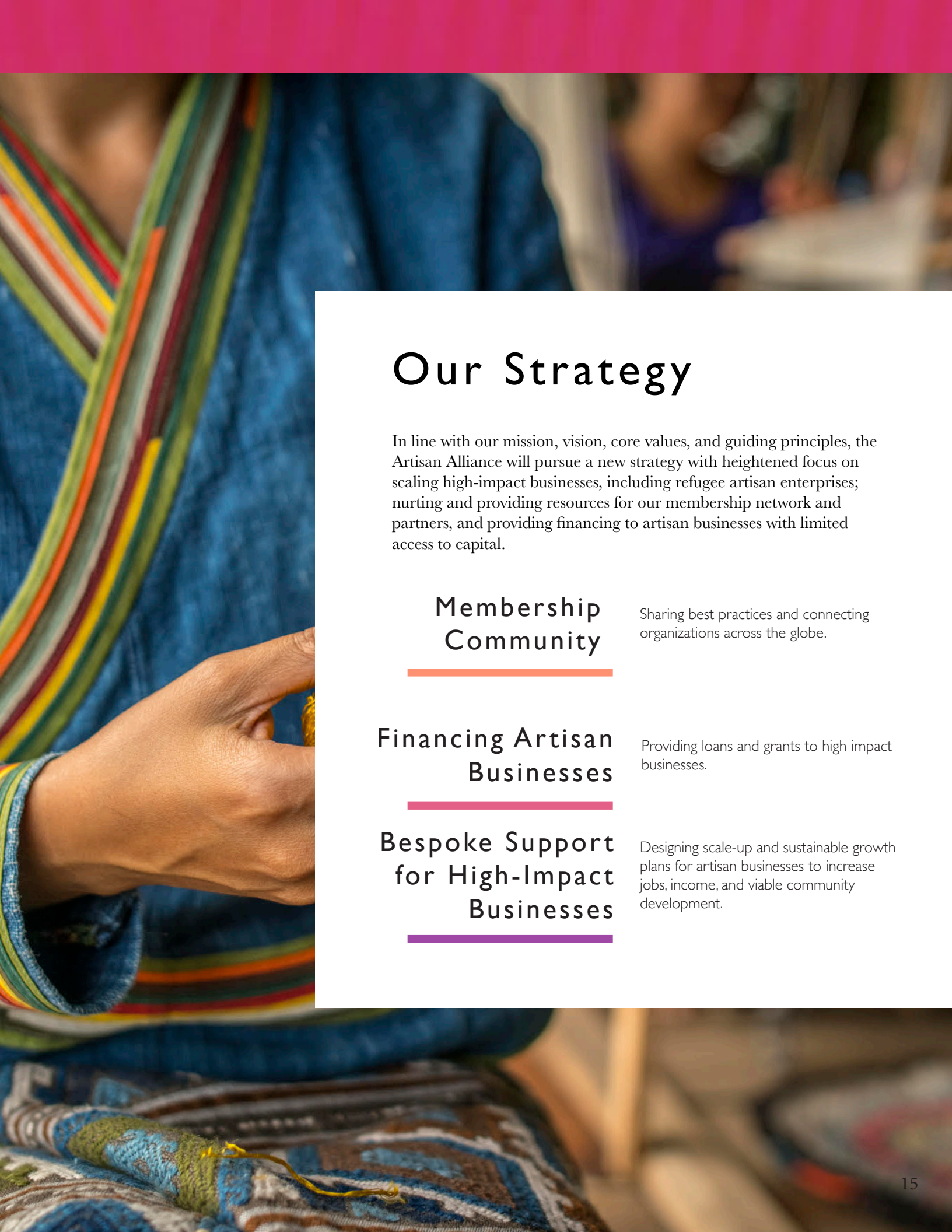


The Artisan Alliance was founded in 2012 with a mission to support the power and potential of artisan businesses to create jobs, preserve culture, and spark development that is grounded in people and place. In our first year, we joined in a public-private partnership with the U.S. State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues. Since our founding, we have held the first gathering of artisans at the US State Department with the Secretary of State; we launched the #chooseartisan campaign; we supported artisans from Tibet to the Amazon with loans and grants; we led roundtables on the potential of the creative economy with financiers; we held workshops with artisan business leaders in Spanish, Quechua, English and French, and we brought artisan leaders to the TED stage. We have grown our membership to over 200 members in over 80 countries and have built a vibrant learning community.

In 2020, we conducted an external assessment of our work to date, with an eye to the future. Based on intensive interviews, research, and reflection, we propose a re-focused strategy with three pillars of work:

- Maintain and grow membership community of artisan businesses and partners
- Continue innovative financing for high impact businesses, including refugee businesses
- Design and support scale up of high impact artisan businesses who are at pivotal moments of potential growth

We hope to grow our membership to 250 members, to provide best practice tools, research and networking to over 150,000 artisan producers, to double our financing to over \$1 million dollars reaching 50 artisan businesses, and to help 4-5 high impact businesses to grow 10-20 % in employees and revenues.



Our Strategy

In line with our mission, vision, core values, and guiding principles, the Artisan Alliance will pursue a new strategy with heightened focus on scaling high-impact businesses, including refugee artisan enterprises; nurturing and providing resources for our membership network and partners, and providing financing to artisan businesses with limited access to capital.

Membership Community

Sharing best practices and connecting organizations across the globe.

Financing Artisan Businesses

Providing loans and grants to high impact businesses.

Bespoke Support for High-Impact Businesses

Designing scale-up and sustainable growth plans for artisan businesses to increase jobs, income, and viable community development.

If you added up the global creative economy it would be equal to the fifth largest economy in the world. If you're looking for innovative ways to help developing countries flourish, artisans are a terrific place to begin.

Secretary of State John Kerry,

Remarks at the US State Department Event

Artisan Enterprise: The New Startup Economy,

2015



228 MEMBERS

Touching more than 100,000
artisan partners in 127
countries around the world

Membership Community | 2019-2020

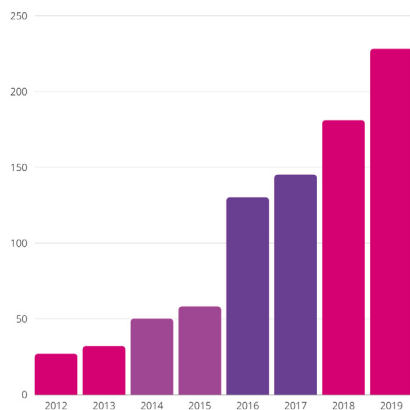
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 GoodWeave International | goodweave.org
 Gracia, Inc. | graciainc.org
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 HAND/EYE Magazine | handeyemagazine.com
 Hands of Hope Artisans Carvers |
artisanshandsofhope.wordpress.com
 Handwork Studio | handwork-studio.com
 Hello Crisp | hellocrisp.com
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 HEVA Fund | hevafund.com
 Higgler | higgler.shop
 Himalayan Naari | himalayan-naari.in
 HUGG Mission Market | huggmissionmarket.org
 Human Connections | humanconnections.org
 ibu | ibumovement.com
 INA + ILIA | inaandilia.com
 Indego Africa | indegofafrica.org
 Indian Artizans | indianartizans.com
 International Folk Art Alliance | folkartalliance.org
 ixoqi textile imports | ixoqi.com
 Jordan River Foundation | jordanriver.jo
 Joya | joyastudio.com
 Kakaw Designs | kakawdesigns.com
 Kámen Road | kamenroad.com
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 Kate Spade On Purpose | katespade.com
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 Living Textiles of Mexico | livingtextilesofmexico.wordpress.com
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 Mushmina | mushmina.com
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 Myshop Asia | myshopasia.com
 NANAY SRL | nanay.com.bo
 NDOP Handicraft Association
 Nella Domenici
 Nest | buildanest.org
 Noble Fibre | noble-fibre.com
 NOVICA | novica.com
 Nü Market | numarket.org
 NYNOW | nynow.com
 Ocelot Market | ocelotmarket.com
 Ock Pop Tok | ockpoptok.com
 Olivia Knox
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 Raven + Lily | ravenandlily.com
 REAL Social Impact | realsocialimpact.com
 RefuSHE | refushe.org
 Relevee / Made by Survivors | relevee.com
 Road to Market | rtmltd.com
 ROOTS of South Sudan | rootsofsouthsudan.org
 Sahalandy
 Saint La Vie | boutiquemexico.com
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 SLOWCOLOR | slowcolor.com
 Soko | shopsoko.com
 Song Saa | songsaafoundation.org
 Soulié | renee-soulie.com
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 StoryCatcher, LLC | storycatcher.tv
 Studio Coppre | studiocoppre.com
 Studio One Eighty Nine | studiooneeightynine.com
 Taller Maya | tallerm.myshopify.com
 Ten Thousand Villages | tentousandvillages.com

Growth from 27 to 228 members and partners



artisanalliance.org/community

Terra Klay | terraklay.com
Textiil | textiil.com
The Arc | thearcshop.com
The Bridge Fund | bridgefund.org
The Citizenry | the-citizenry.com
The Hunger Site/Greater Good | greatergood.com
The Little Market | thelittlemarket.com
The Moon Exports | themoonexports.com
The New School | deed.parsons.edu
The Rich & Strange | therichandstrange.com
The TreadRight Foundation | treadright.org
The West Foundation | thewestfoundation.org
The Weissberg Foundation | weissbergfoundation.org
Thread Caravan | threadcaravan.com
Threads of Peru | threadsofperu.com
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Tuko Pamoja | tuko-pamoja.com
Turquoise Mountain | turquoise mountain.org
Uganda Crafts 2000 | ugandacrafts2000ltd.org
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Union of Craftsmen of Tajikistan | tajikartisans.com/en
Unleashed World | unleashed-world.com
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Vilaasita | vilaasita.com
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The Artisan Alliance is an initiative of the Aspen Global Innovators Group at the Aspen Institute, headquartered in Washington, DC. The Aspen Global Innovators Group widens access to health and prosperity for people living at the world's margins. We bring overlooked challenges in global health and development into plain sight.



artisanalliance.org
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The photos used in this report were shared by:

- Indego Africa
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- Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco
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