**Artisans’ Association of Cambodia (AAC), April 2014**

**Summary Semiannual Report**

1. **Membership**

The current number of member organizations of the AAC is 40 groups. This quarter, interest in membership has been expressed by 8 more groups. These are *Joy of Cambodia, Clay Cult Cambodia, STOPSTART Enterprises,* *Cambodia Weaving Village/SONAS, Kravan House, Lady Penh, Craft Art,* and *De Arbre.*

*Clay Cult* is located in Siem Reap and the others are all Phnom Penh based. *Joy of Cambodia* and *Clay Cult* are excellent examples of the type of programs that AAC is most interested in supporting. Joy supports poor women living in a slum area of Phnom Penh. They make products from recycled inner tubes of bicycles. Clay Cult is aimed at helping disadvantaged youth by training them to make ceramic products.

1. **Technical Assistance and Training**

Training and technical assistance during this period was provided in the areas of design, marketing and organizational development.

**A. Design**

During this period, AAC provided technical assistance in strategic design for 11 organizations and overall training in this area for 19 organizations.

**Strategic Design Training:** AAC was able to enlist a volunteer expert in Strategic Design from *Development Sans Frontiers* to work with the AAC Director. There were 25 people from 19 member organizations who attended the training. The training was designed to provide attendees with a methodology to use in relation to their own brands with regard to appropriate design strategy and to use this methodology to improve their product with regard to quality,

**Strategic Design Technical Assistance:** Seven AAC members were provided strategic design assistance from the volunteer expert. These members included *Sak Saum, Sentosa Silk* and *Rehab Craft Cambodia* from Phnom Penh; *Woman for Woman* from Kandal; *Cambodian Weaving Village/Sonas* from Takeo; *Homeland/Meato Phum Kma* from Battambang; and *Carpet for Communities* from *Poi Pet City.*

The second round members who have been receiving design assistance from the Strategic Designer included all seven of the organizations involved in the initial technical assistance plus four other organizations - *Rajana Handicraft Association, Wathan Artisans Cambodia, Nyemo,* and *Home Net Cambodia.*

**B. Marketing**

The design volunteer also worked with the AAC Director to formulate guidelines for members to help them improve use of showroom/shop concept to guide members in creating the showroom/shop displays and merchandizing strategies.

Marketing Development Volunteer, recruited from *Development Sans Frontiers* came to provide marketing expertise starting in April 2014 and will remain for 6 months. Selected AAC members are undergoing SWOT analysis to provide information that will allow him to provide specific interventions for these members in the area of marketing.

**C. Organizational Development/Management Assistance**

Technical assistance in organizational development matters was provided to three member organizations.

**Mekong Quilt:** On January 19th, 2014, Mekong Quilt Cambodia consulted with AAC on how to becoming a local NGO. The AAC Director provided advice on the process of registration with the appropriate ministry and how to prepare the legal documents required.

**Yodicraft:** On January 21st, 2014, The Director of Yodicraft sought support from the AAC Director in planning the future of Yodicraft and how to maintain membership with AAC. AAC also mentored Yodicraft in the process of transforming from an undefined local grass roots organization to a social enterprise.

**Rajana Association:** In response to a request from a Co-Director of Rajana Association, the AAC Director helped Rajana to address difficult personnel issues such as dismissal of artisans shown to have engaged in immoral behavior even after said personnel were warned in writing

**III. Marketing AAC Products through Trade Fairs**

AAC participated in three major fairs during the first half of 2014. These were the *Angkor Handicraft Fair* held in Cambodia in January, the *Ambiente Fair* held in Frankfurt, Germany in February and the *Angkor Handicraft Expo,* which took place in April at Angkor Wat in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

**IV. Membership Services**

AAC conducted a brainstorming session with its selective members to view the current assistance provided by AAC and situation of all AAC members then brainstormed on what AAC should be doing to be of benefitting its members and AAC in a few coming years.

This year, AAC took over as the organizer of the International Women's Day event in Cambodia. Its success has guaranteed that AAC will be the organizer of the event next year as well.

**V. Networking**

AAC continues to develop cooperative relationships not only with member organizations, but with a wide array of public and private institutions whose concerns are relevant to aspects of AAC interests and involvements. This year collaborative activities were undertaken with: the Cambodian Ministries of Labor and Vocational Training and Ministry of Commerce; Home Net Cambodia; Home Net Southeast Asia; Cambodia International Trade Center; Urban Poor Women Development; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; and the Asian Development Bank.