



To believe in  
*rehabilitation*  
is to believe in  
*humanity.*  
Dr. Howard Rusk~Founder of WRF

## I. PROPOSAL SUMMARY

The World Rehabilitation Fund (WRF), established in 1955, is the worldwide pioneer organization dedicated to the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in developing countries around the globe. WRF projects have ranged from medical care, provision of assistive devices, and socio-economic and psycho-social intervention programs. The Artisans Association of Cambodia (AAC) was created by WRF in 2001 to develop socio-economic integration models in countries affected by landmines. The association now grew from four-member group into the 40 member umbrella association. WRF is seeking funding to develop AAC's capacity and establish the association as a lead organization in social enterprise assistance in Cambodia. AAC is a member of World Fair Trade Organization, and is operating as an independent organization while receiving financial support and technical assistance from WRF. The association's management has identified areas of services improvement for the AAC, in order for the association and its members to be equal competitors in the world market. The AAC member groups employ socio and economically disadvantaged persons like women, people with disabilities, trafficking victims, HIV-positive families and migrants. By providing assistance and building capacity of AAC and its member groups, WRF plans to further affect lives of these vulnerable individuals by providing improved employment and training opportunities, and possibilities of financial growth. Achieving our goal will result in the strengthening of 40 local social enterprise NGOs currently employing over 2,500 people with vast majority belonging to the vulnerable population groups.

## II. NARRATIVE

### 1. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF ORGANIZATION

#### History

World Rehabilitation Fund was founded by Dr. Howard A. Rusk, widely regarded as the “father of modern rehabilitation medicine”. In over 58 years WRF has trained thousands of doctors, rehabilitation specialists, psychologists, community workers, people with disabilities and others to advance physical and socio-economic rehabilitation services. WRF had supported efforts and local professionals in over 150 countries and changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people including persons with disabilities, persons with socio-economic disadvantages, and persons who provide services for these populations. The organization follows the belief that all people regardless of disability have the right to participate fully in their communities, to attain education and viable employment. WRF’s mission is to enable individuals around the world with functional limitations and participation restrictions achieve community and social integration through physical and socio-economic rehabilitation and advocacy; and to prevent disability and reduce disadvantage.

#### Populations Served

Persons served include persons with physical and mental disabilities, landmine survivors, those affected by war and natural disaster. Through our programs we are serving persons ranging from birth to over 90 years old, serve somewhat more females than males and provide services without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other personal identity factor. In Lebanon, for example, WRF serves persons representing all of the many religious denominations who reside their (i.e., Sunnis, Shiites, Maronite and Coptic Christians, Druse and Armenian Apostolic). In Haiti, we are working with faith-based organizations representing the Episcopal Church and the Adventist Church, but serve people of all sects, primarily Roman Catholic, which is the dominant religion in that country. Current programs of WRF are located in Lebanon, Cambodia, Haiti and Pakistan. Over the past 20 years, WRF has worked in Bolivia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Mozambique, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Vietnam among others.

#### WRF Current Programs and Accomplishments

1. **Cambodia** – WRF created the Artisans Association of Cambodia in 2001 as a component of a UNDP supported project to develop socio-economic integration models in countries affected by landmines. The AAC is an effort to help small organizations involved in providing artisan projects to employ socio-economically disadvantaged persons. In 2004 AAC became an independent Cambodian NGO and opened its membership to organizations with social enterprise component that work to provide economic opportunities in the field of craftsmanship and artisanship for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, most particularly women (many of whom were widows, single parents, heads of household), ethnic minorities, and youth. AAC currently consists of 40 member organizations. Throughout these years, WRF continued to support the Association through technical assistance and financial support. Out of the 2,655 employees and producers working in member organizations 73.22% are women, 12.76% are people with disabilities, and 15.1% are youth. In addition, 67.50% of the member organizations are managed and directed by women.
2. **Lebanon** – WRF has been the leading international service organization in the country with regard to persons with disabilities. We have just completed a 12 year project supported by USAID to develop socio-

economic reintegration for persons affected by landmines in South Lebanon. Within this context, this project is believed to have improved the livelihoods and lives of more than 332 primary project beneficiaries (recipients), the lives and livelihood of their dependent family members, and the overall social and economic wellbeing of their communities. More precisely, the project favorably and directly affected the livelihoods and lives of more than 2,200 individuals in more than 332 families (through August 31, 2012); it also had an indirect positive impact on tens of communities, hundreds of families, and thousands of individuals in the targeted Administrative District of Jizzine and beyond. This project lasted 11 Years. WRF is currently embarking on a new project supported by UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to assist with assistive devices to meet the needs of Syrian refugees with disabilities in Lebanon.

3. **Haiti** – WRF supports a project at the Adventist Hospital in the Carrefour section of Port-au-Prince. The project was initiated as a response to the devastating earthquake of 2010. Since then it has provided over 800 braces and artificial limbs for disabled Haitian children and adults. Also in Haiti, At Ecole St. Vincent School for Children with Disabilities in central Port-au-Prince, WRF has provided both financial and in-kind support to the school’s music program – sending instruments, music sheets and other materials to enhance this program.
4. **Pakistan** – WRF support has helped the Pakistan Society for Rehabilitation of the Disabled (PSRD) in Lahore, Pakistan to improve their building space and service programs at the facility which is the leading comprehensive rehabilitation center in Lahore.

### **Relationships with other Organizations**

WRF has consultative status with the United Nations, through UN Economic and Social Council and is a member of Interaction. WRF has accepted standards of governance and business management, such as those of the Better Business Bureau, and Interaction, built upon best organizational practices.

WRF is a fiscal sponsor for the American Friends for the Pakistan Society for Rehabilitation of the Disabled, which raises funds for the Pakistan Society of the Disabled; WRF coordinates on the use of these funds to best support PSRD in Lahore. In Haiti, WRF works closely with Partners of the Americas’ New Jersey-Haiti Partners in helping to bring instruments and materials to Haiti for the music program to Ecole St. Vincent School for Disabled Children. The partner of our prosthetic and orthotic program in Haiti is Prosthetika, Inc, a California based nonprofit. In Cambodia, WRF provides technical assistance to the Artisans Association of Cambodia, which is now an independent organization. AAC is a member of the World Trade Fair Organization and HomeNet Southeast Asia. WRF-Lebanon works with a large number of local service organizations. In Lebanon, Cambodia and Haiti, WRF has cooperated closely and has registrations with the appropriate branches of governments.

## **2. FUNDING REQUEST**

### **Need and Purpose**

The Artisans Association of Cambodia originated to help small projects that were developing across Cambodia. By bringing these organizations together, a number of possibilities were found to occur, such as: lower prices on raw materials due to the fact that greater quantity could be ordered; training programs could be developed to improve production and design; technical assistance (TA) could be provided to assist these

organizations to better manage their operations in areas such as accounting, pricing, product display, purchasing, accounting and inventory control; and better marketing possibilities including public relations and strategies for participating in fairs. As a result of these interventions, and the satisfaction of members, AAC membership has grown to some 40 organizations. The association aims to:

- Improve networking and creating connections among the members as well as with other partners that can encourage and assist them in their work.
- Assist members in organizational development of their social enterprises with effective company policies.
- Assist members in quality control of products and help artisans meet market standards in their production.
- Work with members to explore opportunities to increase the sales of their products, both locally and internationally, including participation at exhibitions and fairs.
- Act as a 'commercial agent' for international buyers, consolidating orders and overseeing the shipment of AAC members' products.
- Advocate and represent the interests of disadvantaged artisans with government and decision-makers.

To provide these services AAC needs to stay abreast on best practices of business management and marketing, have access to innovative resources in product development, and be able to sustain and continuously develop the association's staff and practices. WRF has been supporting the AAC operations, and now would like to prepare AAC for future self-sustainability and phase out of WRF funding.

The international sales of AAC members have grown, and the association receives percentage of profit only from the sales that it has secured. That does not cover the costs of running the association and providing the kind of support required to meet the service needs of its members and continue developing association's and its staff's capacity. AAC has to continue to look for philanthropic funding to support its operations in addition to the profit made from its work. In the past, AAC received support from Ministry of Commerce of Cambodia and from international organizations, but only a small portion of that income was helpful to maintain the basic core of the Association, since the funding mostly supported extra activities. AAC needs targeted capacity building intervention to plan for its sustainability, learn best practices, and improve services for its 40 member organizations.

The very success of the AAC creates the need for a robust targeted assistance to meet the needs of a much larger membership. The purpose of this funding request is: 1) To help AAC carry on its core services; 2) To develop strategies to be a self-sufficient umbrella organization for its members, 3) To position AAC as a leading technical assistance provider to social enterprise organizations in Cambodia; 4) To assist in the continuation and growth of the core AAC services and provide improved services to members.

WRF and AAC would be helping a large number of organizations to successfully run businesses that employ persons who are economically disadvantaged, such as single parents, women and youth, and persons with disabilities who are able to work and develop as artisans. Achieving success will positively impact the lives of individuals by providing them with employment opportunities, income for their families, and improves social status and civil participation. Program success will also contribute to the implementation of the UN millennium

goals, and particularly, to eliminate poverty and “achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people”.<sup>1</sup>

*The overarching goal of the proposed program is to support and strengthen the capacity of the social enterprise groups, members of the AAC, and ultimately improve the well-being of vulnerable people employed at or served by these organizations. Achieving this goal will result in improved livelihoods of at least 1950 individuals (70% of a total number of individuals employed by AAC member organizations).*

**The population to benefit** from this project is economically disadvantaged Cambodian people. These include persons with disabilities, women (including widows and other single parents), trafficking victims, and persons who are ethnic minorities. These persons are hired by the member organizations of the Artisans Association. These organizations are grass roots associations from five provinces in Cambodia (Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampong Thom and Takeo areas) producing artisan products for local and international markets. Increased marketing and product quality improvement will allow the artisans to earn more and move from subsistent lives to levels that will allow them to meet the needs of their families and themselves.

### **Strategies**

WRF will engage its organizational management and capacity building consultants to deliver AAC strategic plan including solid tracks for financial stability, self-sufficiency and growth, providing webinars and other online and print resources to AAC staff and representatives of member organizations on topics of product design and quality improvement, marketing, and other subjects of identified need. WRF and AAC will utilize assistance of expert consultants in above mentioned areas. The project will also build partnerships with the Design Schools in Cambodia and connect them to AAC and its members in order to provide training and technical assistance in design aspects of the work. As a result of these interventions, the organizations will become more successful in production and sales and, therefore, be able to hire more disadvantaged persons and provide higher compensation to these workers.

Specific **goals** for the proposed project are outlined below, including objectives and impact indicators in order to achieve and measure the progress for each goal:

#### **1) To strengthen business and entrepreneurial capacity of AAC and its members.**

**Objective 1:** To provide technical assistance (TA) and training to at least 30 member organizations of the AAC in vital areas of artisan work: ongoing/upon request assistance in areas as identified by AAC: marketing, organizational development, innovative production methods, product design and quality, pricing and other areas, to be determined at the launch of the program. The assistance will utilize hands on, email, webinars and online communications. WRF will develop resources on a monthly basis, which will feature best practices on the topics that will be determined as the program proceeds.

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<sup>1</sup>..At the global level 1.2 billion people are still living in extreme poverty. [...] Globally, 384 million workers lived below the \$1.25 a day poverty line in 2011—a reduction of 294 million since 2001. The gender gap in employment persists, with a 24.8 percentage point difference between men and women in the employment-to-population ratio in 2012. Source: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>

**Objective 2:** Provide at least 12 training opportunities to the AAC member organizations, with staff of at least 32 member organizations to participate in at least two sessions.

**Impact Indicators:** Measured by the number of TA instances; satisfaction ratings for each training and TA activity; overall performance evaluation; at least 75% of respondents indicate that they would suggest the training to others.

**2) To increase the attractiveness of AAC products for international buyers.**

**Objective 1:** WRF will develop and improve AAC's and members' websites to facilitate online sales.

**Objective 2:** AAC attends at least one International Trade Fair, with at least three connections that result in future sales.

**Impact Indicators:** Number of websites developed and improved; increased online sales figures as compared to previous sales of at least 75% participating organizations. Number of business connections made as a result of attending the fair; at least 3 connection to result in increased sales for AAC on behalf of its members.

**3) To improve the livelihoods of artisans from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.**

**Objective:** WRF will focus their TA and organizational capacity building activities particularly on organizations hiring and serving vulnerable populations. At least 30 such organizations will receive assistance.

**Impact Indicators:** At least 25 member organizations report increased average wages of artisan employees and increased number of artisans from disadvantaged population hired.

**4) To position AAC on the pathway to become a lead agency in Cambodia in providing technical assistance to social enterprise organizations.**

**Objective 1:** WRF facilitates strategic Mind-Mapping exercise with AAC staff and Board and plans an AAC's road map with established deadlines and parties responsible to achieving each of the outlined strategic priorities.

**Objective 2:** A system will be developed to allow AAC to assess and certify the quality of products produced by member organizations. AAC will be able to issue a Seal of Approval for the products deemed to be of high quality. Factors such as quality of production and use of artisans of vulnerable populations will be aspects of the criteria.

**Impact Indicators:** AAC strategic work plan and financial plan developed; documents are accepted by AAC staff and Board.