

Kumbaya Annual Report 2014-15

The measure of our work is held in the hands of our producers, women and men, for whom we draw and cut, fashion and sell, plan and propose. It is written by them in the language of thread across cloth, heard in the thrum of sewing machines racing to finish, felt in the buzz and crackle of energy zinging across the room, read from the their eyes at the end of the day. Did we do well by them? Was it enough? Did it make a difference? Did it make sense? Were they happy? What were our mistakes? How can we correct them?

This guild, made up of marginalised people, is on the threshold of becoming Kumbaya Producer Company Limited. One day the annual report of Kumbaya will be entirely written by them. Today we can catch a glimpse by including what they say.

Rubina from Satwas Bhawan:

“I come from a very conservative Muslim family. I wasn't allowed to step out of the house alone. When I first started coming to the Satwas center, my husband would stop me. Without telling me, he would come and stand outside the Bhawan to inspect what I was doing, sometimes multiple times a day. But I persisted. And now he asks me why I am not going to the Bhawan when we have a day off!

Kumbaya has helped me build an identity for myself. People recognize me now! This is a new feeling for me. I do not have to work as farm labour on other's fields anymore. The financial support I provide to my family is equal to that of my husband. I am also a member of an SHG and am able to put some of my money away as savings every month. I want to continue working with Kumbaya for life!”

Rekha from Bagli Bhawan:

“I love spending my day at the Bhawan. I lost my husband 7 years back and I only used to cry the whole day sitting at home with his memories...with Kumbaya, I have found a new way of living. I am the most talkative one in the Bhawan and am always smiling. Now, I just cannot sit idle at home.....I love coming here and spending time with everybody. We have our own farm..... the combined incomes from the farm and Kumbaya are enough to sustain my family. The previous year went by really well.....my income has been better and much stable and I learnt a lot of new things! ”

Parmila from Bagli Bhawan:

“We learnt many new styles in the previous year like the patchwork skirt, skirt with border, patchwork bags. Everything that is made in Kumbaya is beautiful. We also feel like wearing it. A lot of times we celebrate the completion of a new style of kurta, skirt or top by wearing it ourselves and acting to walk the ramp. ”

Sunita from Bagli Bhawan:

“Staying at the Bhawan keeps me happy and involved. I live with my parents, my daughter and son and I am an extra earning member. We are all companions of each other at the Bhawan and there is no scope of any stress here. We just keep on moving our hands with the machine and having fun while working. I earn Rs. 2500 per month on an average. The previous year went smoothly. I am happy here.”

Usha from Satwas Bhawan:

“I come from Punarwas. We were rehabilitated here. My husband does not work on most days and often refuses to let me come and work here. But I will not stop. This is my work! Initially, to convince him, I would work here as well as go work for daily wages on the fields with him. On a couple of occasions, I have had to ask the Bhawan supervisors to come home with me and help me convince him. I support my family with what I earn by working with Kumbaya. What would I do without it?”

Samota from Neemkheda Bhawan:

“I saved some of the money I earned each month and bought a sewing machine for myself. Now I can stitch in my free time. I make clothes for my family, and stitch things needed at home. My family is very happy, and I am too.”

Sanju, Producer, Satwas Bhawan:

“I have seen huge changes in myself. I now feel confident enough to talk to anyone. Earlier, I was very shy and wouldn't speak to anyone. My family too has now started appreciating the work of Kumbaya.”

Maya, from Satwas Bhawan:

“I live with my parents and have a three year old child. Kumbaya means a steady guaranteed source of work and income for me, which I need to look after my child. I no longer have to depend on the seasonal work on the fields.”

In the period where our orders from TRIFED and Last Forest Enterprises stopped this year, many of the producers suffered and felt that their incomes took a hit. Urmila, a producer with Kumbaya for over 15 years at Neemkheda Bhawan, speaks for everyone when she says that smaller orders translate to fewer pieces of each item for each producer. Fewer pieces mean that by the time a producer picks up speed, the order is over and the next new style is on their machines. This affects their overall productivity. Making a whole garment or an accessory fast requires continuous practice.

Many producers left this year because of incomes going down, even though Kumbaya managed to get orders through many new partnerships that took off. We could not compete with the wages being paid at the factories and garment manufacturing units in Indore and in neighbouring towns. When a financial crisis hits the family, like crops failing or ill health, a few of our producers are forced to leave us, some even permanently, to migrate to cities to work in these factories. Getting trainees to join as producers has been equally challenging.

Bano, from Neemkheda Bhawan, says she prefers to stay at home in the village with her parents and work at the Kumbaya Bhawan. If only she could have made a little more to enable her to save some of her monthly income, she would not have had to go and work at a factory in Indore for 4 months last year. She came back mainly because there was no-one to look after her child in Indore.

On the other hand, the work of some of our newer producers has improved over the past year, which has meant better incomes. Saroj, a differently-abled producer from Neemkheda Bhawan is always beaming with happiness. “I live with my mother. My brother refuses to support us, so my mother would work long hours on the fields for daily wages. Over the past year, the quality of my work (stitching) has improved and I have started to earn enough to take some of the burden off my mother. Now, she doesn't have to work every day. She is very proud of me. And this makes me very happy.”

Lalita, from Neemkheda Bhawan, had to leave us after her wedding. She relocated to Indore where she is now the sole earning member of her family. By stitching, not only does she earn enough to meet her household expenses, but she is also paying for her husband's education. Her story makes everyone at Kumbaya happy.

In the coming year, we will work hard on increasing the incomes of our producers by trying different production systems and also by improving their sewing machines if we are able to get funds. We also hope to continue expanding the number of producers in Kumbaya by encouraging more women who are trained by us to join us as producers.

TRIFED

More than two years of hard work on revised costings and innumerable representations to TRIFED 2012 to 2014. Yet when Kumbaya finally got an order of nearly Rs. 11 lakhs in April 2014, it was still at the old rates. It was a total shock, as though months and months of appeal after appeal had fallen on deaf ears.

Kumbaya has always stood for good design and quality at affordable prices, ensuring fair wages to our producers. TRIFED has been repeatedly pressurising us to reduce our already rock-bottom prices even further. Our fabric suppliers like Dastkar Andhra Marketing Association (DAMA) have been consistently raising prices for handloom cloth because of the rise in the prices of yarn and weavers wages. Kumbaya was caught between the two. To do the order at the old rates meant slashing the wages for our producers, defeating the very purpose of our work, as all other costs are beyond our control. We were unable to accept the order.

Therefore it was an unexpected loss of potential business worth nearly Rs. 25 to 30 lakhs this year from them. Moreover, because of their convincing reassurances all through, we had already placed the order for weaving thousands of meters of cloth. So we were sitting on cloth worth Rs. 12 lakhs as well.

The TRIFED orders we have received every year for almost a decade now have been crucial for Kumbaya, not only providing regular employment to our producers, but also because of the network of Tribes India stores where Kumbaya products become available in major cities across the country. An added bonus was that the waste generated from these large orders was helped to create the signature Kumbaya patchwork range. We intend to continue our efforts to engage with TRIFED and win back their orders.

Last Forest Enterprises

It was a major blow to see another long standing partnership dissolved. For Kumbaya, Last Forest Enterprises has been the the most important relationship, and the happiest experience for over a decade. It is the 'Green Shops' of Coonoor, Kotagiri, Ooty and Mysore that launched Kumbaya and made our work visible to the country. Due to a series of unfortunate and unforeseen circumstances in the previous years – Last Forest Enterprises's financial constraints and internal restructuring, change in Last Forest Enterprises's leadership, Kumbaya's lapse in quality control, audit scrutinies on Kumbaya due to unconditional extended credit to Last Forest Enterprises – led to years of collaboration, mutual benefit and trust coming to a standstill. At a conservative estimate, we lost Rs. 15 lakhs worth of orders for the year. And just like as with

TRIFED, in anticipation of regular business, we had sunk over Rs. 8 lakhs of our scarce resources in fabric, specifically purchased for the Green Shops.

Losing both TRIFED and Last Forest Enterprises meant a combined loss of Rs. 40 - 45 lakhs this year and precious resources locked up in a large inventory.

Kumbaya Retail

However, we took this as valuable breathing space to rethink and re-examine our work. Where were we going wrong? What aspects needed more attention? In the absence of large orders what should our interim business strategy be? How do we improve? We realised that this was actually an opportunity to explore - new styles and materials, and products and people, and that we had many places to go.

Happily, there was a spate of new retail enquiries, from brick and mortar stores, online stores, and exhibitions.

Kumbaya's partnership with **White Brick Wall**, a new multi designer concept store in Panjim, Goa began in June 2014. **Home & Style** in Chennai started in the same month. Our first consignments were sold out and repeat orders were placed by both stores by August. We reached **Sasha** in Kolkata in August. Sasha has been a pioneer in promoting organizations of craftspeople since 1979. They are internationally recognized and export a majority of their product range world-wide. In September, we sent a small consignment to our customer **Curio Fact**, an eco-friendly and handmade products store located in Bhavnagar, Gujarat after a long gap.

Today Kumbaya products are available at 'Kriti' in Pondicherry, 'Maya La Boutique' in Mysore, 'Gram Bharat' and 'Mesh' in New Delhi, 'White Brick Wall' in Goa, 'Home & Style' in Chennai, 'Sasha' in Kolkata, 'Saaz Paar' in Jorhat.

We customize our range of products for each retailer based on a analysis of the sales report sent by them each month. We also invite retailers to put together a selection of products based on their knowledge of the local clientele. The good thing is that retail stores multiply the visibility of our brand in different cities. There are many difficulties however. Most stores do not stock our entire range, payments are on consignment basis and so cash trickles in, sales may be affected by the way merchandise is displayed, we do not get sufficient customer feedback and so on. We will be trying to work out ways in which these partnerships can be strengthened.

We received a few more enquiries through the year which are yet to materialize. Communication is ongoing with Eka Lifestyle in Bengaluru. Amethyst, a lifestyle store in Chennai is interested in Kumbaya's products. Genesis, a lifestyle store in Bangalore is also interested in stocking Kumbaya's range of products. Ms. Karobi, a coffee shop owner in Guwahati expressed her interest in selling Kumbaya products at her store. We look forward to developing a good relationship with all.

Some possible international collaborations were also explored this year. Ms. Susanne Mulholland, owner of Take Your Seat (<http://www.takeyourseat.com.au/>), an online store in Australia visited Kumbaya on 27th October, 2014. She was very impressed with the finishing, detail and product range and we hope to establish a relationship with her soon. Ms. Sahib Mann, a customer from

Belgium expressed her interest in buying Kumbaya products. We are exploring how Kumbaya can start meeting these demands from customers overseas.

Exhibitions

We went all out attending exhibitions this year.

The **Mango Collective** in June 2014 was a very small exhibition organized by A Hundred Hands, in Bangalore. There was particular appreciation of the high quality, innovative designs and reasonable prices of Kumbaya products. Thanks to our partnership with A Hundred Hands, one of the most important outcomes of this exhibition was that **Eka Lifestyle**, with stores at Jayanagar, Ulsoor, Phoenix Mall Whitefield and the Ritz Carlton, offered to retail Kumbaya products. We have started communicating with them officially and have sent the Kumbaya product catalogue and website link. The prospects for a retail partnership with Eka look bright in the coming year.

Looms Weaves and More by Aesthetique saw Kumbaya in Kolkata, along with many high end design and craft labels in August 2014. We decided to attend this exhibition because we wanted to reach out to Kolkata.

Right after, **Sasha** invited Kumbaya for the **Annual Fair Trade Fair** at Kolkata in September 2014, at the beginning of the Durga Puja Festival. They also kept a handful of products for their own collection and asked for further consignments.

We got several other invitations like the Kolkata Haat exhibition, Mahindra Sanatkada Lucknow Festival, Craft Bazaar 2014 by the Craft Council of India and so on, but we decided not to attend these exhibitions, because it was important to work on improving quality and operational efficiency, while building up stock for our major exhibitions in Delhi, and Bangalore.

Suddenly, in a stroke of good fortune, just as we were wondering how to apply for the Kalaghoda Arts Festival in Mumbai, we got an invitation from Concern India Foundation and Secure Giving, who facilitate the annual 'Ongoing Mela 2015' in Mumbai as part of the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival. The Ongoing Mela, organised by Secure Giving, is a unique gathering of NGOs with an objective to provide them with a platform to market products made as part of their rehabilitation programmes as well as to network with fellow counterparts.

In December 2014, we participated in the fifth edition of **The Handmade Collective** by A Hundred Hands for which the theme was 'Poetry'. We prepared a range of wallets and cushion covers with screen printed poems of Kabir and Pablo Neruda and Chinese calligraphy. This range completely sold out. It was the fifth year of our membership with A Hundred Hands.

The New Year began with the **Dastkari Haat Samiti Crafts Bazaar** held at Dilli Haat for 15 days where Kumbaya's performance was a grand success. Like every year, we were acknowledged for the best sales this time too.

The month of February 2015 began with record breaking sales at the **Kala Ghoda Arts Festival** from 7th to 11th February 2014 in Mumbai. Kumbaya presented a wide range in women's wear, including some new styles especially designed for this event. It was particularly well attended because we were privileged to have many well-wishers and supporters in Mumbai like Caring

Friends, Ms. Bharti Dalal and Sanjivni Trust, Axis Bank Foundation, and many other well wishers. Thanks to Axis Bank Foundation we did a two day sale at the **Axis Bank House** in Worli, after the Kalaghoda exhibition, on the 12th and 13th March 2015 as well.

Ms. Bharti Dalal and Sanjivni Trust sent a number of cut pieces of fabrics, swatches, sample garments and pattern making tools to Kumbaya and also visited us soon after in February personally to give us a donation.

We were also honoured by a visit from Shri Rajeev Sethi at our stall at Kalaghoda. The very next day we received an invitation to participate in the **Lotus Bazaar (South Asian Chapter)** as part of Sasian Journey's first assembly in Delhi from 28th to 31st March, 2015. The exhibition is supported by JSDF (Japan Social Development Fund) and the World Bank. It is organised by the Asian Heritage Foundation of which Shri Sethi is the Chairperson.

Kumbaya had a great time at the Lotus Bazaar. Many luminaries of the fashion world like Zandra Rhodes, Andrew Logan, Robyn Beeche, Ritu Kumar, Mr. Rajiv Sethi himself, painters like Neelima Sheikh, and many others, appreciated Kumbaya's work, products and concept.

AnanTaya, a globally recognized interdisciplinary lifestyle design store based in Jaipur and Kolkata asked Kumbaya to supply products for an exhibition called Maahi Roj (Earth Day) from 18th to 28th April 2015 at Jaipur for which we despatched a consignment from the Lotus Bazaar itself. **MESH** (Maximising Employment to Serve the Handicapped) also took some of our products to showcase in their own shops in New Delhi and Hyderabad. MESH is an Indian Fair trade organisation working with persons of disability and leprosy affected craftsmen.

Kumbaya Online

To ensure larger outreach for Kumbaya products we felt it was important to go online as e-commerce is fastest growing segment taking over the market. We very carefully began with '**Craftisan**' from the many online portals who had approached us in 2012 - 2013, because Craftisan is an e-commerce company that showcases exclusive handcrafted creations by artisans, master crafts persons, craft clusters and NGOs across India. Moreover, Mr. Mahesh Subramaniam, CEO, visited Kumbaya in May 2014 and was very helpful in showing us the ropes. Through this collaboration, Kumbaya's products went online for the first time in July 2014 and featured Kumbaya's patchwork products made out of fabric waste.

We will also be featured online with the e-commerce portal **iTokri** in the near future. After a long and fruitful sales pitch, Kumbaya got an order of more than 3 lakhs from them. For a first time customer, it was quite sizeable.

Rustic Bazaar, a new online platform, was also keen on showcasing Kumbaya. We had to think of a product line that was different from iTokri and Craftisan for them. They successfully launched their website with our garments and home linen products.

Finding People

Finding people for Kumbaya is always a challenge. Candidates appear for interviews, are shortlisted but do not end up joining because of lucrative offers in cities. However, this year was a little better and we had five new professionals joining us in June 2014. Seema Yadav, Mani

Kumari and Usham Irabot Singh from G.B. Pant University, Allahabad along with Seema Grewal from Delhi School of Social Work, were appointed Programme Officers. Subhradip Sur Choudhury from Azim Premji University also joined as a Project Coordinator. Sadly, only two of the five new recruits have stayed on.

Internships

We have had a very active year of engagements with interns, who through their work and time spent with us have not only assisted Kumbaya growth, but their presence has also energized the team time and again.

Pragya Joshi, a lawyer studying management from IIM Ranchi, volunteered with Kumbaya for five weeks from the end of April to May 2014. Her presence at our Jatashankar location was particularly helpful in filling in for our Programme Officer, Shivangi Pareek, who had to leave Kumbaya due to family responsibilities. She seamlessly took over all the administrative jobs from correspondence, to chasing suppliers, making production schedules, coordinating client visits and so on. Her invaluable contribution was working with our attorney on intellectual property rights, filing all the legal documents required for our application to the Registrar of Trademarks in Delhi so that the brand name Kumbaya and our logo could be trademarked.

Daniela Castillo De Luna, a student of Urban Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, interned with us from June to mid-August. Dani won a scholarship from the Centre of Advanced Studies in India (CASI) at UPenn enabling her to take up this summer internship. In one of most productive internships of just 6 weeks, Dani created a new website for Kumbaya, a catalogue on Pinterest, designed posters, made a brief manual on the pattern making from her notes on the training, and took innumerable product photographs. Moved by our producers, she also profiled many of them and enriched the website with their portraits. We are currently in the process of putting finishing touches to the website before publishing it, and are confident that it will become a powerful tool for us in building the Kumbaya brand further.

Kena Holker, pursuing her MA- Development from Azim Premji University, Bangalore interned with Kumbaya from November 2014 to January 2015. In two months, she worked on documenting our Quality Management System in detail and helped identify and the gaps in our production system. She also prepared a draft manual on the Quality Control Systems of Kumbaya.

Serena Joseph, a student at the Indore School of Social Work, who had also done a course in Event Management, joined Kumbaya for 15 days as an intern in February 2015. She assisted in sending e-invites to our customers, popularising our facebook page, and packing the stock for the exhibition. Most of all, she was a great salesperson for Kumbaya at the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival and Axis Bank Foundation's exhibition in Mumbai.

On our way to becoming Kumbaya Producer Company Limited

Kumbaya Producer Company is in the process of being incorporated. This year involved repeated follow-ups, lots of legal paper work, and preparing proof of identity for our producers which is a time consuming process revealing how hard it is to create documents for proof of life, for a person standing alive right in front. Particularly if that person is a woman who is poor, never went to school, does not remember when she was born, does not own property and whose

fingerprints got blurred and erased because of gruelling manual labour, whose name got spelt differently by different people at different points of time.

At least a beginning has been made, we got the required PAN Cards of some of our producers and the Digital Signature (DSC) of some as well. We applied for Directors Identification Number (DIN) for five of our producers which were also received in this year.

We also applied for the company name of Kumbaya and drafted the MOU and AOA. We are hopeful that the incorporation process will be completed soon and we will be a registered Producer Company in the coming year.

Visitors

The year started off with a many visitors to Kumbaya.

Mr. Pallav Chandra, visiting faculty NID and Pearl Academy along with Ms. Tasnim Kharakiwala, CEO, Last Forest Enterprises (Last Forest Enterprises) visited Kumbaya for two days in April. They gave our team and producers feedback and inputs on garments, accessories, samples and labels. They also placed an order for some new samples during their visit.

As part of the exposure visit of Gandhi Fellows, an interactive session was organized at the Neemkheda Kendra in May 2014. After the session the Gandhi Fellows visited Kumbaya Neemkheda Bhawan, Jatashankar Office and Warehouse.

Kanika Satyanand, founding member and former Executive Director of SRUTI, in New Delhi, also visited Kumbaya in May 2014. She worked for 2 days with our sampling unit, designing and developing several new styles using patchwork on garments and stoles.

As part of the exposure visit program for 10th standard students from Sahayadri School, a one day interactive workshop was organized at the Kumbaya Neemkheda Bhawan in October 2014. Students learnt cloth cutting and waste sorting, and stitched patchwork bags which were gifted to the students by the Kumbaya team as memorabilia.

Krishna Kumar from FroggMag Design Delhi visited Kumbaya in April 2014. FroggMag makes decorative and functional souvenirs with magnets and a range of products for gifting. Krishna shared his work and made a presentation for the Kumbaya team. This gave the Kumbaya team a fair understanding of the different products that are popular in urban markets and the prices that buyers are willing to pay. Possibilities on the development of new products through a partnership with Kumbaya were also explored.

Several professionals and women members from the SHGs of Jan Sahas, an NGO based in Dewas, visited Kumbaya on 17th October 2014. They appreciated the organized way of working, skill development and participatory approach of our work. Kumbaya led trainings for members of Jan Sahas were discussed and shall be taken forward in the coming year.

Representatives of World Vision India Indore visited Kumbaya in November 2014. 17 producers and 3 management executives spent time at the Neemkheda Bhawan to understand our work. A future partnership with World Vision India was discussed where Kumbaya would help their SHG members in Indore improve their skills in stitching.

Training & Capacity Building

A two day exposure and training visit at Neemkheda Bhawan was conducted for our supervisors and producers from Satwas Bhawan in April 2014. The purpose of the training was to explain the standards of quality control and productivity that Kumbaya maintains. This training was an important step towards improving the quality of work, productivity and efficiency of our producers at Satwas Bhawan.

A primary level 90 day trainings also began at our Bhawans in April 2014. Neemkheda Bhawan and Bagli Bhawan were buzzing with 18 and 12 new trainees respectively as part of the first batch this year. June 2014 saw the induction of 15 new women into our primary level producer training program.

For the first time in Kumbaya, a professional training on Pattern Making and Designs by faculty from the National Institute of Design and National Institute of Fashion Technology, was conducted from the 7th to the 12th of July. The entire Kumbaya team along with two senior producers were immersed from morning to night in this week long intense training. The focus of the training was precise technical pattern drawing for different garments, taking accurate measurements for sizes and grading, industry standard quality parameters, colour theory, fabrics and contemporary trends in design. The trainers were inspired to put in late hours and extra work because of the quick grasp and high motivation of the team.

In an effort to increase the number of new trainees in each batch, a meeting was organized at our Satwas Bhawan on 29th September 2014 with the Kumbaya and SHG teams. The main objective of the meeting was to promote Kumbaya in local communities as well as in SHGs promoted by SPS. Many people suggested spreading awareness about Kumbaya through producer success stories, posters and powerpoint presentations on the Pico projectors in SHG meetings and monthly cluster meetings. However, finally the best spokespersons for Kumbaya were the producers themselves who went to several meetings and talked about their work.

A second batch of primary level training also started with 12 trainees in Satwas Bhawan in November 2014. The trainees were selected from adjoining locations with the hope that they would join as producers later on. 17 new trainees also started their primary training at the Neemkheda Bhawan in December 2014.

The Satwas Story

Geeta Kamle, In-charge, Bagli Bhawan

“The past year was a testing time for the Satwas Bhawan. I wholeheartedly invested my time and effort at the Satwas Bhawan and monitored the work of producers there. Here, Arun would handle the Bagli Bhawan in my absence. Usha, one of the producers at Satwas, had been earning only Rs. 700 ever since she had joined, while producers at Bagli and Neemkheda had risen up to Rs 2500 a month on an average. I really felt like helping her and went and spoke to her drunk alcoholic husband at their home and managed to convince him to send Usha to Satwas Bhawan for work. The Satwas centre’s distance from Bagli and Neemkheda is its biggest drawback and reason why it was on the verge of collapse a year back. I used to travel 100 km from Bagli to Satwas and back, twice a week to ensure that producers are being given work every day and learning well. Today, Usha earns Rs. 3000 a month. ”

Kumbaya started a new Bhawan in Satwas in January 2013. Through our ongoing trainings, many women have learnt how to stitch and a few have joined Kumbaya as producers. However, the quality of stitching by our producers there has always been an area of deep concern for us. As a result, we were only able to send limited items to Satwas for production, those that we felt were easier to make. Repeated mistakes and the time required to correct them also meant very low incomes for our producers. Although additional efforts were being made to help these women, there was no progress and the sustainability of the center seemed difficult.

In June 2014, two of our new professionals, Seema Yadav and Usham Irabot Singh took on the challenging task of managing the Satwas Centre. They were placed there full time to monitor all aspects of the centre, improving training, bringing in new producers from the trainees, focusing on good producers, motivating the supervisors along with putting in stringent quality control measures while ensuring better productivity. In July 2014, Geeta Kamle, one of our most experienced supervisors was also transferred from Bagli Bhawan for some time, to train the supervisors and producers there. Along with training and production, she also started the replication of the MIS data entry and documentation system that is followed at our other centres. Ira and Seema attended many SHG meetings to promote Kumbaya among the women members. With their efforts and with regular inputs from the rest of the Kumbaya team in Bagli and Jatashankar, the quality of production has improved many fold and our producers are now making substantial incomes. Efforts to sustain this trajectory of growth will continue in the following year.

The production of Aari Embroidery and Beadwork products also started at Satwas Centre with a few new producers. They made necklaces with aari work, a popular Kumbaya design, as also bags and garments embellished with Aari work.

Products worth Rs. 18000 produced at the Satwas Centre were sold at the Dastkari Haat Samiti exhibition in Delhi in January 2014. Similarly, sales from the production at Satwas Centre during the Kala Goda Arts Festival and Axis Bank Foundation Exhibition in Mumbai in February were about Rs. 60000. Sales at the Lotus Bazaar in Delhi in March were about Rs. 16000. The most gratifying achievement of March 2015 was that the producers of Satwas Bhawan were fully involved in the frenzied preparations for the Lotus Bazaar in stitching as well as in Aari work.

We have been in conversation with Create-Net, a garment manufacturing firm in Delhi that supplies fashion houses in Europe, and North and South Americas. We worked on very high end samples for a New York fashion label that included Aari work with beads and stitching on fine fabrics like crepe de chine with the hope that we will learn high quality work and get regular orders, especially for our producers in Satwas. If this partnership with Create-Net materialises it will be an incredible opportunity for Kumbaya, not just in terms of revenue, but more importantly, in mentoring and hands-on training by Create-Net in export quality fine stitching as well as international recognition for our brand.

Meanwhile, Seema and Ira discovered that many SHG members knew simple embroidery like the running stitch used for quilting recycled cloth. We are exploring the possibilities of embellishing Kumbaya products with 'godari work', a line to be launched next year.

Finances

We strongly felt the need to raise more resources to enhance core skills of the entire team and to invest in improving the quality of our own operations and outreach. We have been reaching out to banks for CSR grants for skill development and better machinery.

In a step towards this, a proposal for new sewing machines was requested from us by State Bank of India. To increase productivity Kumbaya needs High Speed Juki Sewing Machines and other equipment for our garment fabrication centres. The tentative budget was approximately Rs. 12 lakhs. However, since they only wanted to give an ambulance, we did not hear from them again.

However, Give India asked us for a proposal for a donor who wanted to support women's empowerment. We submitted three proposals for the Capacity Building of Key Team Members, an Executive for Operations, Marketing and Communications, and the Capacity Building of Producers. This was approved and we received Rs 21.6 lakhs for one year from philanthropists, Mr. and Mrs. Amit Chandra just before the end of the financial year.

We have been in conversation with Mr. Ram, co-founder of Rang De. Rang De is a Bangalore based not for profit organization which raises capital for the loans online from individuals/corporations and partner with organizations that are working closely with under-served communities.

Since we unexpectedly lost out on huge orders from Trifed and Last Forest Enterprises, our overall excess of expenditure over income was approximately Rs. 10 lakhs this year.

The total sales at Kumbaya for 2014-2015 were down to Rs. 38.84 lakhs, compared to Rs. 57.5 lakhs in 2013-2014 and Rs. 62 lakhs in 2012-2013.

Some Indicators

The list of orders done and retail shops supplied are as follows:

Sales from Retail Shops		
Organization	Sales Amount	Percentage of Total Sales
SPS Neemkheda Campus	Rs. 6.84 lakhs	17.61%
Kriti Eco Boutique, Pondicherry	Rs. 2.63 lakhs	6.78%
White Brick Wall, Goa	Rs. 2.03 lakhs	5.24%
Maya La Boutique, Mysore	Rs. 1.39 lakh	3.58%
Gram Bharat, New Delhi	Rs. 1.02 lakh	2.63%
Saaz Paar, Jorhat	Rs. 0.98 lakh	2.53%
Sasha, Kolkata	Rs. 0.49 lakh	1.28%

Home & Style, Chennai	Rs. 0.39 lakh	1.01%
Take Your Seat, Australia	Rs. 0.11 lakh	0.30%
Senthil Kumar	Rs. 0.10 lakh	0.28%
Curiofact	Rs. 0.07 lakh	0.20%
Ishwarya Subbiah	Rs. 0.07 lakh	0.19%
Last Forest Enterprises, Coonoor	Rs. 0.03 lakh	0.08%
	Rs. 16.22 lakhs	

The list of sales through online stores is as follows:

Sales from Online Stores		
Organization	Sales Amount	Percentage of Total Sales
Craftisan, New Delhi	Rs. 0.35 lakh	0.92%
Rustic Bazaar, Indore	Rs. 0.20 lakh	0.53%
	Rs. 0.56 lakh	

The list of exhibitions that Kumbaya participated in is shown below:

Sales from Exhibitions		
Organization	Dates and Location	Sales Amount
A Hundred Hands	27th to 29th June 2014, Bangalore	Rs. 1.07 lakh
Looms Weaves & More	19th to 21st August 2014, Kolkata	Rs. 1.16 lakh
Sasha Annual Fair Trade Fair	24th to 28th August 2014, Kolkata	Rs. 1.59 lakh
A Hundred Hands	3rd to 7th December 2014, Bangalore	Rs. 2.14 lakhs
Dastkari Haat Samiti	1st to 15th January 2015, New Delhi	Rs. 6.22 lakhs
Kala Ghoda	7th to 11th February 2015, Mumbai	Rs. 5.37 lakhs
Axis Bank Foundation	12th to 13th February 2015, Mumbai	Rs. 1.12 lakh
The Asian Heritage Foundation	28th to 31st March 2015, Lotus Bazaar	Rs. 3.34 lakhs
Total		Rs. 22.04 lakhs (56.75% of total sales)

This is the list of new designs made:

Designs Made in 2014-15		
No.	Item	Size
1	Ladies Short Kurta Kimono Neck	S to XXL
2	Ladies Kurta Tank	S to XXL
3	Dress Sleeveless Patchwork	S to XXL
4	Dress Sleeveless Flared	S to XXL
5	Ladies Top Sleeveless Flared	S to XXL
6	Maxi Flared	S to XXL
7	Skirt Patchwork	S to XXL
8	Ladies Palazzo	S to XXL
9	Kimono Jacket	Free Size
10	Kumbaya symbol	65 x 40
11	Tote Bag Pineapple Patch	16 x 16
12	Tote Bag-2 (Picasso Prints)	14 x 17
13	Square Bag - 2	10 x 10
14	Gitesh Bag	10 x 10
15	Window Panel	62 x 25
16	Bedcover Picasso	92 x 102
17	Bedcover Picasso	64 x 96

Training and Production

No. of Trainees trained in Neemkheda, Bagli – 86

No. of Trainees trained in Satwas Bhawans- 31

No. of Trainings conducted in each of the 3 centers – 2

No. of Pieces produced at Bagli and Neemkheda Bhawans – 10391

No. of Pieces produced at Satwas Bhawan – 1323

No. of patches made by differently-abled producers - 5693

No. of patches produced at Satwas Bhawan - 703

No. of finished patchwork products made - 1293 including 198 Patchwork Bedcovers

Value of patchwork products made out of waste – Rs. 11.69 lakhs

Learnings for the Year

- Design - we have to dedicate separate time and resources for product design, and design development – in materials, processes, operations to come up with our designs ahead of time.

- Quality - we have to make better production systems to ensure quality, dedicate people to exclusively monitor quality and make each person commit to quality.
- Get large orders - Till now Kumbaya has never had to seek orders. The unique concept, design and quality of the product has led buyers to us. But from now we will have to pro-actively seek clients who understand the reason behind Kumbaya and give us sizable and consistent orders, to keep growing in the face of rapid competition from other social enterprises like ours.
- Human Resource - The Kumbaya team needs to grow to include more professionals who can drive sales, build the brand, expand operations, deliver quality, help bring in new technology, skill, energy and so on.
- Capacity Building - At the same time we need to work on the leadership capacities of the Kumbaya team - to take initiative, be more focused, pro-active, decisive, confident of themselves and their work, and persist - never letting an order go, taking quick action, being more efficient to forge ahead of others in the market.
- Engaging with Producers - Producers have to be empowered further to participate effectively in decision making, understanding the market as well as articulating their demands. Producers have to be empowered further to take collective action and responsibility for quality, deadlines, making systems work instead of being passive participants.
- Building Teams – We have to work much harder on teamwork, and team spirit, communication, ethics and accountability to enhance and energise the Kumbaya team to perform better and feel happier.
- Social Media - We have to be more active on social media
- Photo Documentation – we need to make a consistent system to document our work.