



ANCHAL PROJECT INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT
May 2016 - November 2017

1. Please provide the following information:

Program Title: *Designing Colorful Change*

Grant Amount: \$60,000

Contact Person: Colleen Clines, Anchal Co-Founder & CEO

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2. Recap briefly what outcomes the program was designed to achieve.

Designing Colorful Change's goal is to expand Anchal's textile program to include a natural dye house that introduces new skills and careers to commercial sex workers and women vulnerable to entering the sex trade in Ajmer. Specifically, we are training and employing 35 new women in natural dyeing and offering the 100 current artisans the opportunity to expand their education in the design and textile industry.

DCC is an exciting, unprecedented project that is introducing new proficiencies and careers to the target population in Ajmer, India. A natural dye initiative is also serving to re-establish lost traditions of natural dyeing techniques and promoting eco-friendly production. The natural colors derived from native Indian plants will enhance Anchal's textile repertoire for an increasingly expanding market. Combined with our kantha sewing program, this project has the potential to become a large-scale textile program that can employ 135 women full-time by 2019. *DCC* exemplifies Anchal's innovative approach and allows us to design change through new creative and innovative solutions to dire need.

3. Has the funding changed for this program?

The funding for this program has not changed since the Grant Proposal.

4. Is your organization or program situation different than presented in the approved proposal?

Additionally, Anchal's situation has not changed significantly since the Grant Proposal. Anchal's staff has the same leadership team in the United States and in India, with the same NGO partnership. The team has grown indirectly as a result of the Dining for Women Sustained Funding and allowed Anchal to secure greater visibility in the market.

5. What challenges are you facing as you move forward with this project? How are you approaching these challenges?

With the implementation of the first phase of natural dye training and setting up a dye facility, we have

gained a tremendous amount of knowledge about new needs and challenges that we will face moving forward. There are four main challenges that Anchal is facing with implementation of a natural dye program which include:

- a. Finding a trainer that has experience in natural dyes, and is also willing to travel to Ajmer for training. This challenge delayed our training timeline by 6 months.
- b. The need for larger volumes of water in the arid state of Rajasthan.
- c. The equipment and workshop infrastructure required for larger volumes of naturally dyed fabrics. We initially underestimated the infrastructural needs for industrial sized dyeing. We have to keep outsourcing our current dyeing of fabric because it is too large for Anchal to do in house with limited infrastructure.
- d. The lack of consistency with natural dyes from batch to batch has presented challenges in fulfilling product orders.

The good news is that our challenges at present are not things we cannot overcome! We have addressed or are addressing the challenges with the following approaches and solutions:

- a. Since we could not find an expert to come to Ajmer, we went to the experts for training. Anchal sent 15 artisans and our management team to a 3-day training in Bagru, India, 2 hours from Ajmer and the home to block printing and dyeing. This allowed the current management team to learn the basics of natural dyeing so that they could continue the training when the whole group returned to Ajmer.
- b. We are researching low impact dyeing and how we can incorporate rainwater capturing systems into future infrastructure additions to the Textile Center.
- c. The Anchal team is developing methods and designs for small batch production until we can raise funds for larger equipment. The current equipment and product designs will employ the target community part time and yield specialty product lines.
- d. This is a marketing and sales challenge. Similarly to the sari kantha quilts, we plan to share the story and beauty of natural dyes despite variations.

6. Have you revised your original objectives since the project began? If so, why? What are your new objectives?

Our objectives have evolved slightly after research and discovering certain challenges discussed above. Essentially, the objectives remain the same, but now include more opportunity for women to earn funds while the dye infrastructure logistics are resolved. See below for the original objectives and additions made.

- a. Research and design development of natural dye production, dye colors and techniques. (ORIGINAL)
- b. Hire Trainer & Set-up dye facility. (ORIGINAL)
- c. Train & employ 15 women in natural dyeing in year one. (ORIGINAL) We will also train the same 15 women in machine stitching and hand quilting. (ADDITION)
- d. Train & employ the first 15 women and 10 more women in natural dyeing in year two. (ORIGINAL) We also trained the same 10 new women in machine stitching and hand quilting. (ADDITION)
- e. Train & employ the first 25 women and 10 more women in natural dyeing in year three. (ORIGINAL) We also trained the same 10 new women in machine stitching and hand quilting. (ADDITION)
- f. Conduct bi-monthly educational workshops for all 135 artisans. (ORIGINAL)

As a result of the delay in training, we trained and hired the 15 women to learn the other skills Anchal

offers to avoid a delay their employment. Conducted by a master tailor, the 15 new women started training in basic kantha quilting, machine stitching, and tailoring of new products from patterns. By training women in both techniques, artisans can earn while we scale up the dye program. The women participating are happy with the opportunities.

7. What progress have you made toward achieving your objectives? Please address each stated objective.

- a. Anchal's CEO and Creative Director, Colleen & Maggie Clines, traveled to Ajmer in September 2016 to research successful dye initiatives in India. They met with several natural dye experts and block printers in the region and visited a factory to learn more about the infrastructural needs required to launch a natural dye initiative. The Anchal team also tested natural dyes both in India and in Kentucky to discover the most successful colors and which fabrics to use. Colleen & Maggie conducted the first education workshop to all of the artisans on the basic principles of natural dyes and demonstrated how to naturally dye with marigold. Each artisan made their first natural dyed tie dye piece. Based on the findings, the team designed pieces unique to the story of our artisans and the story of Anchal.
- b. We hired a new project manager to oversee increasingly more demanding day to day operations. We have rented a new workshop that is a welcoming and safe environment and will be perfect space for our initial natural dyeing facility requirements. We have also started purchasing the equipment required for natural dyeing including dry racks, pots, and water. Finally, we hired Jai Texart to do a 3-day intensive training on their campus in Bagru.
- c. We conducted a women's health camp with free screenings to over 90 women as a method to identify and recruit new commercial sex workers to the program. We successfully identified and recruited 15 new artisans for natural dye training. Please find an excerpt from our Program Director Saloni Gupta and artisans about the natural dye training.

“In the initial stage, it was difficult for us to convince artisans for attending this training, as many of their family members were not ready to send them outside for this training and for overnight stay. But, our team talked to artisans and explained them how important it is to go outside and attend this training. This training will not help you in learning of one concept, Natural Dyeing, but it will also help you in your overall development. They emphasized on, why it is so important to go outside and learn things practically. So, with the efforts of our team, the artisans were finally ready to go for attending this training.

It was really joyful for us to see them attend this training; many of them have not gone to school even once in their whole life. For all of them, it was altogether a different experience and they loved it completely. They enjoyed the journey of bus, staying up late till night, talking to their friends having discussion about Natural dyeing and of course their personal lives!

The artisans were most interested in learning about the making of black color from horseshoe. One being from Ajmer, everyone had knowledge about the horseshoe. So, when our trainer started explaining about it, they all felt little confident and happy that they already know some part of this process. At last, they were really surprised how by using the horseshoe and jaggery we can obtain natural black color. Also, Hemant ji, our trainer, told them a story about natural black color, dating to ancient times.

They even said: “we would have never got any such chance in our whole life, if we would not have attended this training.” Another one of them said, “Usually we live our lives for children, parents, parents in laws, husband but, while this training we lived our life once on our own and for ourselves. So, in a way you can say the training was only one part of their journey but, they completely loved the whole experience.”

In the last day, you could clearly see sparkle in their eyes, when certificates were distributed. For most of them, it was THE MOMENT of their life, as they are never called at any platform or are being respected in such manner. It was like a lifetime achievement for them.

Natural Dyeing was a total new concept for the artisans. It just opened up their eyes in another new manner. They realized that fabric is also of two types: Natural and Chemical. While learning about the process, they understood the importance of natural fabric. They understood that natural dyed fabric is the like the healthy food for our skin. If we eat healthy then we will stay healthy. Similarly if we will wear natural fabric than it will help our skin to breathe naturally. They learnt about the different varieties of plants and how we can extract color from them. They also learnt about the dyeing machines in which over 1000 meters of fabric can be dyed naturally.

When Shama joined Anchal, she joined as a washing woman but now she is one of our best project assistants. In this whole training, I clearly saw the curiosity she holds in her, she was the only artisan with diary and pen in her hand who wanted to keep record of the things which they were teaching. She was not that shy in this training, she was the bold Shama who without any hesitation was ready to ask questions from her side, from trainer. I saw her confidence was raised to another level while this training. Before this training, when we use to give any task to her we can see the fear in her eyes, fear of making mistakes but, after this training, when I gave her some tasks which were new for her, she happily accepted to do them and said smilingly “Whatever you will ask me to do, I will LEARN and do because, you trusted me and now I am able to do so many new things such as stitching, writing etc. I never imagined that I have potential to do so much, other than only doing household chores. I will do more new tasks so I can learn more”

8. Do you anticipate any difficulties in completing your project in the timeframe outlined in your proposal?

Due to the challenges, our program was delayed by 6 months. However, since we also included additional stitching training and employment we were able to stay on time for our hiring and training plan.

Anchal anticipates that *Designing Colorful Change* will be able to successfully implement its Year 2 goals to hire 25 new women and train artisans to dye fabric with natural methods. However, as we learn more from regional experts, we are learning more about the complexities of natural dyeing and the larger infrastructural requirements needed to execute a natural dye house. We will certainly have 35 women trained in natural dyeing as outlined and a facility set up for production as outlined in the proposal. I think the expectations of scale have changed which is why they also can earn through other aspects of the program.

9. Expenses

(See attached)

Thank you Dining for Women! The funding has not only supported the Designing Colorful Change project, but has indirectly catapulted Anchal into continued growth. Since the Sustained Funding, Anchal has garnered the attention of companies like CAUSEBOX, notable celebrities like fashion icon Iris Apfel, and working with press editors from well respected publications like Better Homes & Gardens, BRIDES.com, and Design Sponge to gain national and international exposure for our products and stories. Our Sari Quilt that was created with the support of DFW received the prestigious Best in Market and Best New Product in Handmade Global at the NY NOW tradeshow in 2017. Anchal plans to now employ 300 women by 2020. This will double our current impact. DFW supporters are the reason we are able to support women worldwide and we are so incredibly

grateful.

Sincerely,
Colleen Clines + the Anchal team