



**PROKRITEE**

a fair trade company  
manufacturing and  
exporting handicrafts



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2016 - 2017**



WELCOME

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## FORWARD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



designed to tell you the story behind the production process and the pitfalls we face along the way. We want you to know the reasons behind the delays in productions, the work that goes behind each sample development process, and why it is challenging for us to work with the artisans who often have little or no formal training on making the products that would go on to be featured in your online or retail store.

I am pleased to present our Annual Report for the fiscal year 2016-17. In our previous Annual Reports, we mainly focused on presenting the financial status of our organization, but for this year's Annual Report, we decided to tell you more about the people we work with: the staff members at our Head Office in Dhaka, our Unit Managers and their colleagues, and our humble artisans. The reason behind this is simple: we want you—our buyers, supporters, and patrons—to know about the people working behind each and every successful order.

From start to finish, this Annual Report is

We hope, after going through this Annual Report, you will see that our products mean more than just fair-trade products. You will see that each of our products tells a different story and reflects our determination to help thousands of female artisans living in the rural areas of our country.

Swapan K. Das  
Executive Director

“Our products tell our stories.”

## FROM OUR BUYER



Prokritee staff always have their eyes on quality and are continually presenting new designs in unique and interesting ways. This is especially important because the retail market in North America continues to exhibit significant challenges, with each year featuring an increase in the number of choices available to consumers, while the expectations for inexpensive products continue to rise. This is especially true in terms of “brick and mortar” retail stores, but it is also having an effect on e-commerce sales, as the number of e-commerce outlets continues to increase almost exponentially. Individual retailers need to learn as much as possible about their unique customers, and then cater to their needs.

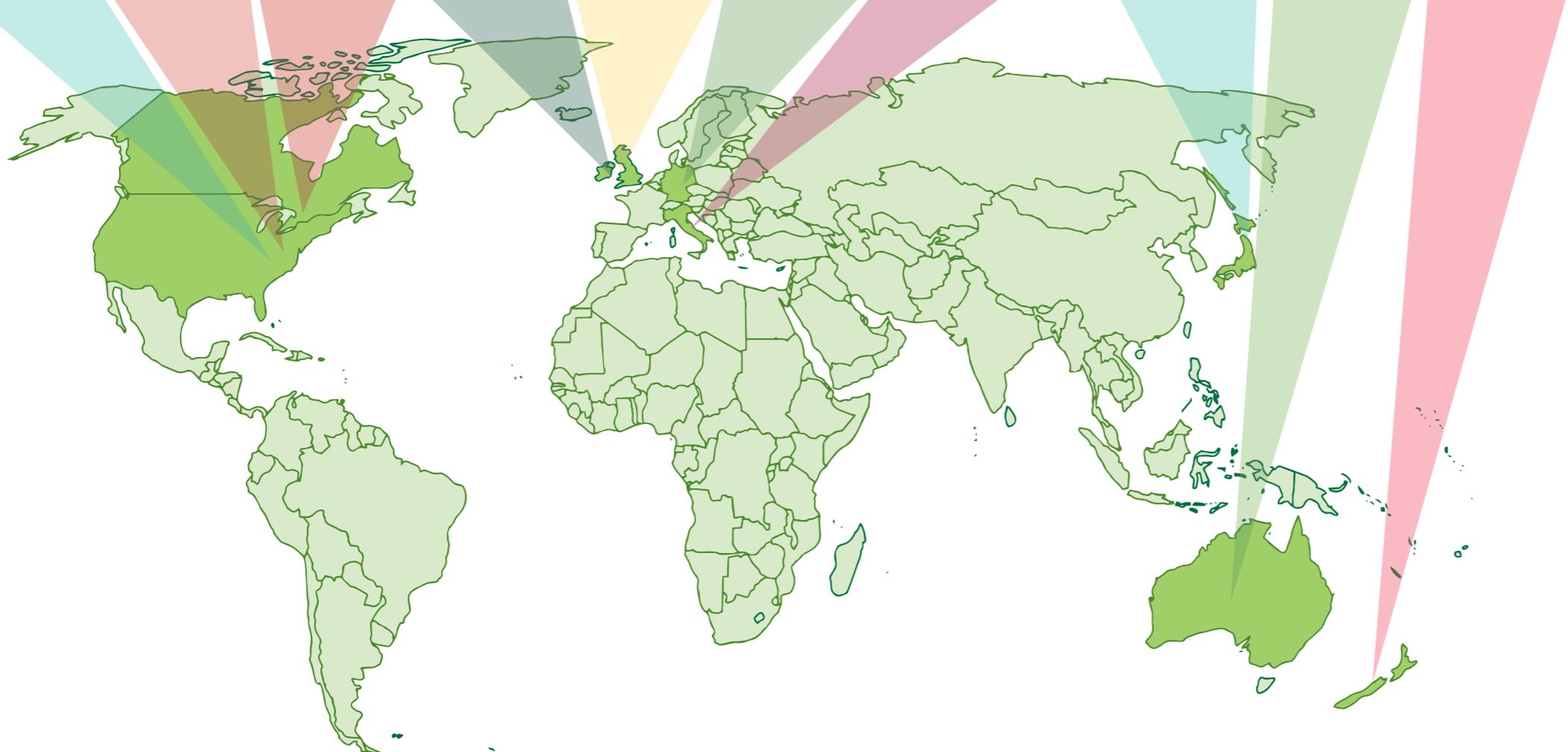
Melissa T. Hand, Ten Thousand Villages



Fairtrade and Proud.



<b>Trades of Hope</b> US \$ 37,632 USA	<b>Ten Thousand Villages USA</b> US \$ 229,103 USA	<b>Ten Thousand Villages CA</b> US \$ 117,338 CANADA	<b>The Body Shop Int.</b> US \$ 242,523 UK	<b>Traidcraft</b> US \$ 81,472 UK	<b>El Puente GmbH</b> US \$ 43,652 GERMANY	<b>CTM</b> US \$ 144,693 ITALY	<b>Fair Trade Company</b> US \$ 21,199 JAPAN	<b>Oxfam Shop Australia</b> US \$ 58,699 AUSTRALIA	<b>Trade Aid Importers</b> US \$ 24,685 NEW ZEALAND
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top ten buyers

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



Here is our financial status for 2016-17:

**Income July 2016 – June 2017**

Sales Export	US \$ 1,399,719
Sales Domestic	US \$ 305,895
Interest Income on Investment	US \$ 24,363
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>US \$ 1,729,977</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Cost of Sales	US \$ 829,787
Administrative Expenses	US \$ 653,588
Marketing Expenses	US \$ 31,019
Development expenses	US \$ 9,074
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>US \$ 1,523,469</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>US \$ 206,508</b>

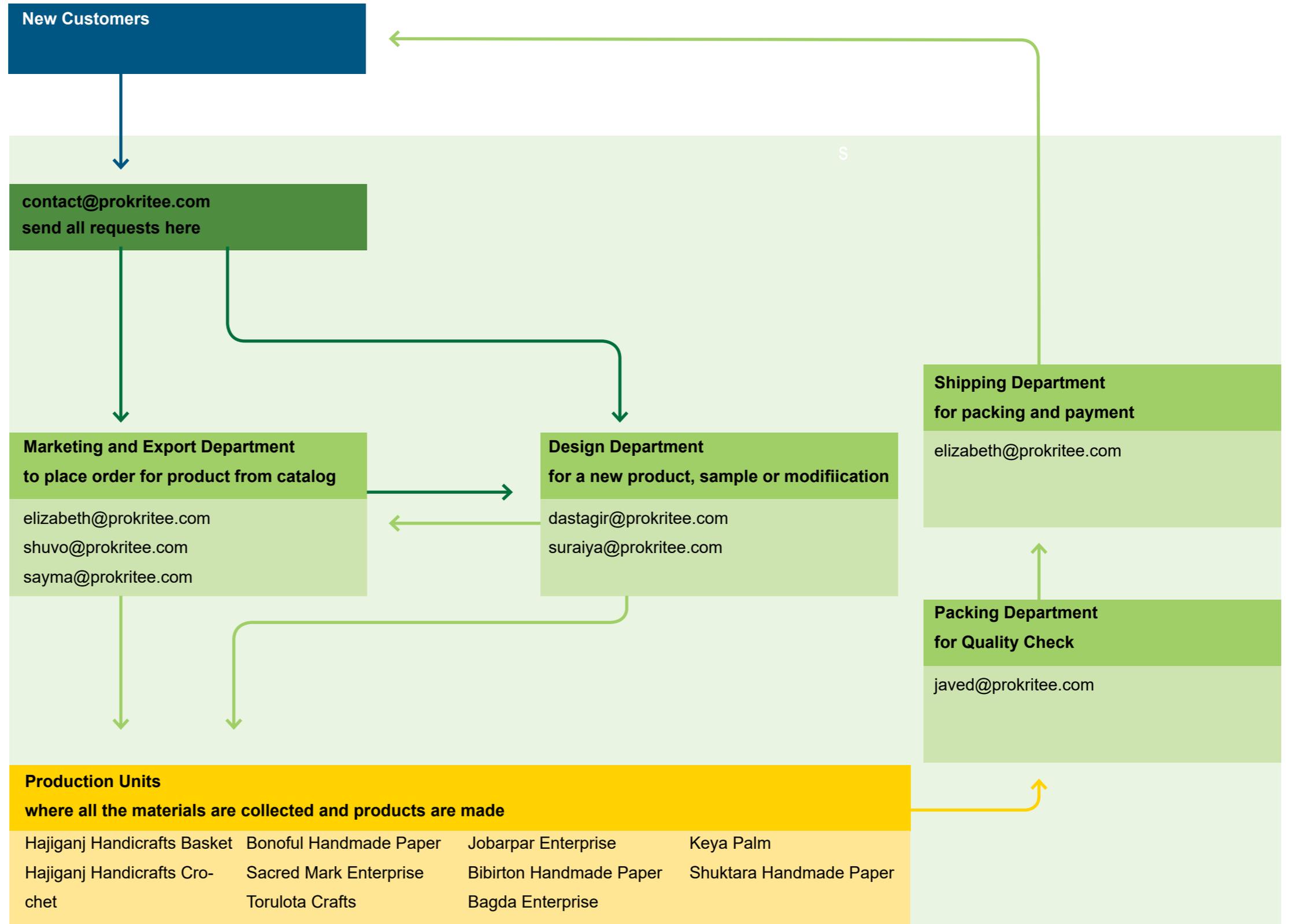
Md. Feroz Hasan  
Deputy Manager-Internal Audit

# WORKFLOW



The workflow chart on the right is a graphic representation of how we handle our orders. You can send any request to [contact@prokritee.com](mailto:contact@prokritee.com). Requests from our existing catalogues are sent to the Export and Marketing Department, whereas new sample development requests are sent to the Design Department. These departments then forward your requests to the production units, who make the products/ samples and send them to our Packing department. After quality checking, the shipping department sends the finished goods to your requested destination.

Abdul Majid Mallik  
Board of Director



## PLACING A NEW ORDER



### How do I place a new order?

If you are a new buyer and are wondering how to place an order, you are on the right page.

The first few steps are simple: You have to tell us what kind of product you are looking for (email: [contact@prokritee.com](mailto:contact@prokritee.com)). We will check your request and send you the appropriate catalog(s).

After that, you have to let us know the codes of the products you want to buy.

We will make a Proforma Invoice based on your request and send it to you for a final confirmation and a tentative delivery date. Once you confirm the Proforma Invoice, we will send

it to our production units. When the products are ready, we will let you know and request payment. After receiving payment confirmation, we will ship the goods to your destination.

### How do you accept payments?

Sorry, we don't have PayPal in Bangladesh yet; so, all the payments are sent via wire transfer.

### What shipping method do you use?

For small and quick shipments, we use FedEx and Air Cargo shipping facilities. For bigger orders, we use sea shipment. We have our own agents here, who help us determine the cheapest shipping costs.

If you are a new buyer and have no idea about shipping, don't let that hold you back. From start to finish, until the order reaches your destination, our whole export department will be at your disposal.

Elizabeth D'Costa  
Manager-Export Sales

## CUSTOMISED LABELING



Packing is an important part of shipping. If something is fragile, we have to be very careful and put extra padding (bubble paper, corrugated paper) inside the cardboard boxes that we use for packing. If a particular product has natural ingredients (leaves, bamboo, jute, etc.) in it, we use Silica Gel packs inside the boxes. These protect the products from moisture. Additionally, for large sea shipments, we use up to 5 Dry Bags per container to protect your products from moisture. We also do labeling and final quality checking during the packing process.

Javed Akter  
Senior Accounts Officer-Export



Simple way of living and working.





## SAMPLE DEVELOPMENT



Jobarpar Enterprise 's Designers



To develop new samples, you can directly email our Design Department at [contact@prokritee.com](mailto:contact@prokritee.com). If you want, we can also do some modifications on the products from our existing catalogs to meet your expectations. But, please keep in mind that sample development and any modifications to our existing products take time, because we work with natural ingredients, which are not always available. Also, bringing out the appropriate colors on natural ingredients (leaves, grass, bamboo, etc.) is a difficult task, as we have to use AZO-free dyes, which often change their tone after the drying process. We can also do label design to go along with your products.

Suraiya Chowdhury  
Advisor-Design

## WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR



### Agents of Change:

In Bangladesh, we have 10 production units, where we employ more than 2000 women who come from impoverished backgrounds. Most of these women are illiterate and have very little technical skills. Each of them has a unique life story: some are victims of domestic abuse, some face social hardship brought on by divorce, some have lost their homes to local loan sharks, etc. **(For artisan stories, visit our website: [www.prokritee.com](http://www.prokritee.com))**

Through working with Prokritee, we help change the lives of these women, not only by providing them financial stability through work, but also through technical training to help build their human capital. To run these workplaces

and manage these training sessions, we need people who know about us and the 10 fair trade principles under which all of our units operate. We need highly skilled people who can effectively work with these rural women, and communicate with our international buyers as well. More importantly, we want people who are willing to become agents of change through the spreading of the ideas and values behind fair trade goods in their local market.

### Entrepreneurs:

Most of our units were started by entrepreneurs, with the help of MCC (Mennonite Central Committee). Beginning after the liberation war of 1971 and continuing until 2000, MCC has done an amazing job of finding entrepreneurial spirits in local communities. In 2001, MCC passed down that task to us, and since then we have encouraged hundreds of entrepreneurs to join our team. If you are an entrepreneur who specializes in handicraft products, please contact us and we will help you reach a potential buyer.

**(For Prokritee's history visit our website: [www.prokritee.com](http://www.prokritee.com))**

Afzalun Nessa Chowdhury  
Chairperson, Prokritee

## FUTURE PLANS



The future belongs to those who believe in the power of their dreams.

Through working with Prokritee, you can help us save Bangladesh's handicraft industry. It has immense potential in the world marketplace where the concept of fair trade is well known and respected. If you want to work with us or volunteer, please send your CV to [contact@prokritee.com](mailto:contact@prokritee.com).

For those of you who are studying in universities and colleges please spread the word of fair trade among your classmates and colleagues, write about fair trade on your blog and social media, let people know about Prokritee, and most of all buy fair trade products.

Marina Tabassum  
Board of Director



Fairtrade never stops you from being fashionable.

## DOMESTIC MARKET



The concept of fair trade is well known in countries abroad, that is why we mostly export our products. However, to local consumers, fair trade is still a foreign concept, which is why we have seen a drop in our sales (down by 3%) in the last fiscal year.

Our local outlet, called Source, is located in Asadgate, Dhaka, where we try to employ young college students so that they can spread the word about fair trade among their classmates. We need people who know about fair trade and can market its importance in the local market.

Thomas D' Costa  
Assistant Manager - Source

Source Team

## FROM OUR UNITS



My name is Sajal Krishna Datta and I am the Unit Manager of Biborton Handmade Paper Project, which is a production unit of Prokritee. This unit was set up in 1993 by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) as a part of their job creation program. Currently, 90 female artisans work under this unit.

We use silk, waste paper, jute, water hyacinth to produce high-quality handmade paper. Some of our best selling products are notebooks, photo frames, paper bags, Christmas decoration and gifts, wrapping papers, and greeting cards.

Working under Prokritee is always a challenging task for us. Whenever we get a new order from Prokritee, we have to stop our regular production process and focus on making the ordered products. Most of the time, we have a deadline, which puts extra pressure on our producers. We have to ask them to stay late and work for us so that we can catch the deadline.

Staying late for work is a hurdle for these women. We do of course pay them for overtime, but their families often don't want them to work outside after it becomes dark. This is especially true if the artisan is unmarried.

Also, I know I speak for all the Unit Managers of Prokritee as well, that in the rainy season, due to lack of sunlight, it becomes difficult for us to procure good quality raw materials and dry finished goods. Prokritee is closely working with all the units to figure out a way to maintain the quality standards in the humid condition of our country during the rainy season.

Sajal Krishna Datta  
Unit Manager  
Biborton Handmade Paper

## FROM AN ARTISAN



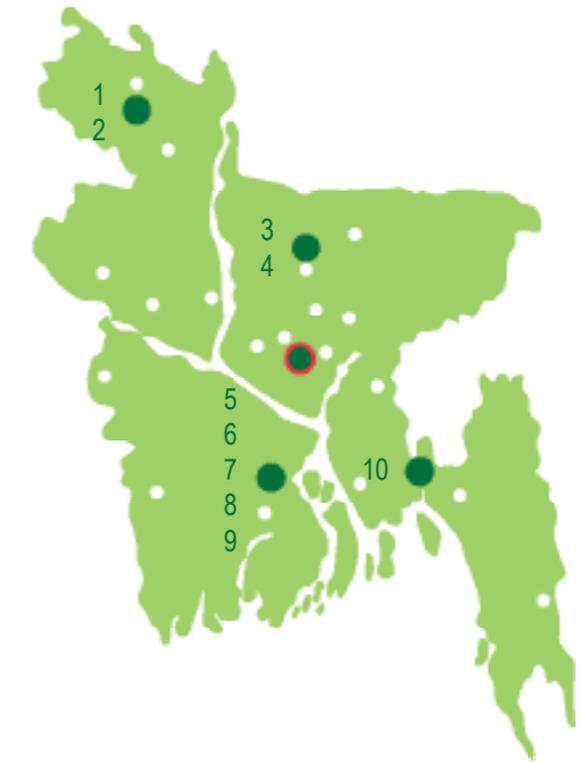
Hi, my name is Rahima Akter. I work for Biborton Enterprise. All day I make bath mitts, using hemp and jute fibers. I like my work here, as I work with other women who are also my neighbors.

When I first wanted to work with Biborton, my

**“I feel safe here!”**

husband and mother-in-law were really angry, but when they saw the workplace and met the Unit Manager, they gave me their permission. Through working with Biborton, I was able to save up some money, which I used to buy a piece of land last year.

Rahima Akter  
Producer, Biborton Handmade Paper



- 1 **Hajiganj Handicrafts Baskets Unit**, Hajiganj, Nilphamari
- 2 **Hajiganj Handicrafts Crochet Unit**, Saidpur
- 3 **Bonoful Handmade Paper**, Muktagacha, Mymensingh
- 4 **Sacred Mark Enterprise**, Mymensingh
- 5 **Jobarpar Enterprise**, Jobarpar, Barisal
- 6 **Keya Palm Enterprise**, Boromogra, Barisal
- 7 **Torulota Handicrafts**, Nagarbari, Barisal
- 8 **Bagdha Enterprise**, Bagdha, Barisal
- 9 **Biborton Handmade Paper**, Kalurpar, Barisal
- 10 **Shuktara Handmade Paper**, Charipur, Feni

- **Prokritee Headquarters**, Dhaka
- **SOURCE**, Dhaka



Hajiganj's basket and blankets .

## hajiganj basket unit

**Location:** Hajiganj, Nilphamari

**Unit Manager:** Sk. Ahmed Uallah

**Total Artisans:** 30 regular; 87 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Baskets made from recycled saris, Kaisa grass, Palm leaves, Hogla (sea grass).

**Last Year's Sale:** US \$ 113,385

## hajiganj crochet unit

**Location:** Saidpur, Nilphamari

**Unit Manager:** Sk. Ahmed Uallah

**Total Artisans:** 35 regular; 46 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Crochets made from recycled sari

**Last Year's Sale:** US \$ 69,661



Soaps from Sacred Mark Enterprise  
Bath Mitt from Bagdha Enterprise.

## bagdha enterprise

**Location:** Bagdha, Barishal

**Unit manager:** Kalipada Adhikary

**Total artisan:** 68 regular, 150 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Bath mitts made from hemp and jute.

**Last Year's Sale:** US \$ 246,326

## sacred mark enterprise

**Location:** Mymensingh

**Unit Manager:** Ishrat Jahan Deepa

**Total artisan:** 28 regulars, 27 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Soap made from coconut/palm oil and essential oil.

**Last Year's Sale:** US \$ 104,342



Bags from Shuktara  
Notebooks from Bonoful

## bonoful handmade paper

**Location:** Muktagacha, Mymensingh

**Unit Manager:** Richard J Sarkar

**Total artisans:** 50 regulars, 13 seasonal

**Best Selling Productss:** Paper and stationery items made from jute, hemp, wheat straw, pineapple leaves, coconut fibers, recycled newspapers, cotton waste, etc.

**Last Year's Sale:** US \$ 121,103

## shuktara handmade paper

**Location:** Charipur, Feni

**Unit Manager:** Md. Abul Kalam

**Total artisans:** 40 regulars, 7 seasonal

**Best Selling Productss:** Bags made from jute and recycled sari, paper made from water hyacinth, jute, cotton waste, banana fiber.

**Last Year's Sale:** US \$ 83,022



## jobarpar enterprise

**Location:** Jobarpar, Barisal  
**Unit manager:** Papri Mondal  
**Total artisans:** 43 regular, 25 seasonal  
**Best Selling Productss:** Christmas decors and ornaments made from handmade paper.  
**Last Year's Sale:** US \$ 90,304

## biborton handmade paper

**Location:** Kalurpar, Barisal  
**Unit manager:** Sajal Krisna Datta  
**Total artisans:** 60 regular, 28 seasonal  
**Best Selling Productss:** Paper made from jute, water hyacinth, and silk  
**Last Year's Sale:** US \$126,616



We promote social change through mutual help and reconciliation.

## keya palm

**Location:** Boromogra, Barisal

**Unit manager:** Jaganath Datta

**Total Artisans:** 45 regular, 25 seasonal

**Best Selling Productss:** Home decor and jewelry made from Palm and Keya leaves.

**Last Year's Sale:** US \$ 68,368

## torulota crafts

**Location:** Nagarbari, Barisal

**Unit Manager:** Jaganath Datta

**Total Artisan:** 15 regular, 10 seasonal

**Best Selling Productss:** Baskets made from pathi grass. Other products: table mats, jewelry boxes.

**Last Year's Sale:** US \$ 32,195



PROKRITEE BOARD



### **Prokritee Headquarters**

House # 1/1, Asadgate Road, Block-A

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