

Artisans from Handmade by Friendship Bridge® program participate in New World Crafts Fair

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More than 20 entrepreneurs part of the Handmade by Friendship Bridge® program by [Friendship Bridge](#) participated in the 17th edition of the New World Crafts (NWC) fair, organized by Agexport; the event took place in Antigua, Guatemala.

The “Handmade by Friendship Bridge®” artisan program aims to support its clients in establishing contacts with potential buyers and other organizations of interest so that they can grow their ventures and contribute to the economy of both their households and their communities.

This initiative is also supported by the Bridge to Success program, which seeks to showcase credit opportunities for the development of craftswomen from the departments of Sololá, Quetzaltenango, Quiché, Huehuetenango, Suchitepéquez, Retalhuleu, Chimaltenango, and Sacatepéquez.

In this edition of the NWC fair, 6 artisans participated directly and another 15 entrepreneurs indirectly (their products are being exhibited). Regarding the 6 participating artisans, they showcased their products characterized by design innovation and the use of environmentally friendly practices, thus seeking the sustainability of their businesses.

“Participating in international craft fairs like New World Crafts allows artisans to showcase their products and creative talent to new global audiences. In addition, it enables them to understand the trends and preferences of buyers, as well as explore export opportunities for their businesses,” says Sussan Hrozek, Senior Coordinator of Handmade by Friendship Bridge®.

Over two days, the artisans of the Handmade by Friendship Bridge® program displayed their textile products at booth #102.



Handmade, a brand representing Guatemalan handicraft

Through its brand, "Handmade by Friendship Bridge®," the program seeks to empower female artisans in Guatemala by providing them access to microcredit, business management training, design advisory, and marketing of their products to formalize and grow their craft businesses.

"The craft program is an opportunity for growth and development for Guatemalan artisans, as well as for expanding the reach of their handmade products to other markets," explains Sussan of Friendship Bridge.

Thus, Handmade by Friendship Bridge® uses ethical trade and training to connect the beauty, art, and tradition of Guatemalan handicraft with international markets, directly benefiting the weavers, embroiderers, seamstresses, and artisanal jewelry designers behind each unique handmade piece.

With this program, ancestral craft techniques are preserved, and sustainable income is generated for their families and communities, supporting more than 40 female artisans to date; they originate from the departments of Sololá, Quetzaltenango, Huehuetenango, and Quiché.

Among the main achievements of Handmade by Friendship Bridge® are:

- More than 100 designs of new products made.
- Developing at least one product with high value in the international market.
- Sales and shipping of samples to international markets, stores, and museums that support fair trade and cultural preservation.
- Learning about market trends, as well as tastes and preferences of the international market. Developing sustainable production processes.
- Being a source of employment in the artisan women's communities.

It's worth mentioning that in 2023, more than 33,000 products were made for the local and international market, selling in markets of the United States, Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Turkey, and Australia, generating an estimated 1,006 jobs during the year.