Jaipur Rugs to train 10,000 Indians in advanced carpet weaving

Jaipur Rugs Company has announced that it will train some 10,000 people in northern India on advanced carpet weaving techniques and provide them with access to global markets by 2015 as part of the firm's commitment to the Business Call to Action (BCtA), a global initiative that encourages companies to fight poverty while boosting business opportunities in developing countries.

Ms. ASHA CHAUDHARY
CEO, Jaipur Rugs

Jaipur Rugs, one of the largest manufacturers of hand-knotted carpets in India, is helping low-income people – approximately 60 per cent of whom are women – in the most economically disadvantaged regions of India gain access to local employment opportunities. Weavers in Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan will receive one-month training in advanced carpet weaving techniques and quality control to improve the quality and quantity of rugs produced.

Jaipur Rugs is globally renowned for its hand-knotted rugs and the way they are woven to contribute to socio-economic development. The rugs are exported to about 30 countries. It is famous across the world for its Social Entrepreneurship Model which it has developed over the three decades by making production of hand-knotted rug industry completely meant for grassroots level people.

There are more than 60 processes in producing hand-knotted rugs. Each process provides its own potential of employability or work scope. This model or business was founded in 1978 with nine artisans. Since then, Jaipur Rugs has evolved 40,000 jobless people by assigning them to these processes.

Weavers who demonstrate exceptional carpet making skills will go on to receive training to train and manage other weavers in the village.

"Although there are 2.5 million artisans weaving rugs in India, most are not well-paid. In recent years, weavers have seen their wages

plummet due to contractors imposing unfair pricing practices when purchasing carpets at the village level," said Susan Chaffin, BCtA Programme Manager. "We at BCtA welcome Jaipur Rugs' commitment to creating new and sustainable job opportunities for women and unskilled, low-income labourers in villages, thereby enabling them to earn a secure livelihood."

According to the International Labour Organisation, approximately 17 per cent of men and 66 per cent of women in rural villages are unemployed. Among those that have jobs, 30 per cent of men and 36 per cent of women live below the poverty line.

Initiatives such as Jaipur's provide jobs and opportunities to those people that need it the most. Trained weavers contracted through Jaipur Rugs earn an average of $300-$500 more per year than unskilled artisans.

"Through this initiative, we have the opportunity to provide sustainable livelihoods to the poorest of the poor in an economically disadvantaged region of the world," said Asha Chaudhary, CEO of Jaipur Rugs. "Each time you buy a rug and I sell it, we contribute to alleviation of poverty and create employment for underserved communities."

Since inception, Jaipur Rugs has provided training to more than 28,000 low-income home-based weavers and an additional 12,000 wool spinners and dyers. This latest commitment by Jaipur Rugs is part of the company's long-term growth strategy and plans to extend its market globally.

The Business Call to Action is a global initiative that seeks to challenge companies to develop inclusive business models that offer the potential for development impact along with commercial success. The initiative is the result of a partnership between the Australian Agency for International Development, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, UK Department for International Development, US Agency for International Development, United Nations Development Programme, UN Global Compact, Clinton Global Initiative and the International Business Leaders Forum to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Companies report on progress toward commitments on an annual basis. ◆