

Creating an Efficient Marketing Plan for Aid to ArtisansU

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Abstract

This purpose of this project was to develop a marketing plan for sustainability of Aid to Artisans' e-platform, Aid to ArtisansU. The team accomplished this by completing the following five steps: defining the mission, identifying the target audience, advertising through print and social media marketing, and finally, locating sponsors to finance it. We provided short-term and long-term recommendations to update the platform and maintain the website for future sustainability.

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Readers interested in more information about this project should contact Professor Fred Looft or Brigitte Servatius via email at [fjlooft@wpi.edu] and [bservat@wpi.edu].

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Executive Summary

The United States is one of the top two countries for giving back to the global community: in terms of helping a stranger, volunteering time, and donating money (CAF, 2014). Americans donate their time, labor, and money for people in need; these philanthropic actions are one of the many causes in the rise of nonprofits within the United States.

According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics (2015), there are roughly 1.06 million 501(c)(3) public organizations in the United States. Of these organizations, there are more than 40,000 registered nonprofits that focus their efforts in international communities (NCCS, 2015). These American nonprofits have to compete for a limited amount of money, a total of \$358.38 billion (NCCS, 2015), and must strategically advertise new programs in order to capture the attention of potential members, donors, and constituents.

Aid to Artisans (ATA) is one such organization that attempts to inform its members, low-income international artisans, of its goal to help in expanding their businesses and in promoting their handicrafts in the American market. Since 1993, ATA offers assistance through its Market Readiness Program™, field-based customized training, and financial aid in international communities (ATA, 2015d). In 2015, Aid to Artisans established an e-platform, Aid To ArtisansU (ATAU), meant to foster interaction between ATA's constituents, sponsors, and partnering communities. However, there were not enough resources to fully market ATAU in its inception. Thus, the WPI team was tasked to help inform people about the website and gain online traction.

The goal of this project was to develop a marketing plan for Aid to Artisans' e-platform, Aid to ArtisansU (ATAU), to increase membership online. We accomplished this goal by evaluating ATAU's capacity to engage artisan leaders, retailers, and buyers through the current online format, and implemented short-term marketing strategies to update and publicize the website. We also presented long-term recommendations for future sustainability of the online platform, and compiled a list of sponsors to help finance it.

Our first step was to understand the different resources on the online platform. We created user profiles in order to interact with the website and record what aspects needed updates and re-formatting. We also met with the ATAU web development team to get a comprehensive overview of the e-platform.

In order to raise awareness about the new website, we attended craft shows, visited local nonprofit organizations, and scheduled videoconference calls with international artisans and other global nonprofits to present ATAU and highlight its benefits. During these presentations, we conducted semi-structured interviews to receive feedback on the resources or lack thereof on the website. We also promoted the ATAU website through social media posts and email updates sent to the entire ATA contact database. The emails included a link to the website and our online survey, which included questions about the user's experience with the website.

During our time in Washington D.C., we also presented technical additions for the website. This resulted in the implementation of several updates, including a new "badge" certification system, search filter modifications, and bug fixes. We created a final task list for any recommendations that we were unable to implement on site, prioritized based on importance.

Finally, we conducted archival research in order to compile a list of potential donors that could fund the ATAU project. We produced final recommendations for Aid to Artisans to sustain

the platform, and offered a list of responsibilities for any future ATAU interns to maintain the website.

After seven weeks, we were able to expand ATAU's geographic reach from 47 countries to 87 countries, and gained 25 new members on the platform. Moreover, we noticed a large increase in public interest for ATAU's resources after the implementation of our marketing strategies. Although we did not receive any results from our online surveys, we were able to get a lot of information from the interviews and conversations we held during our in-person presentations. These responses were used to form our short-term and long-term recommendations for Aid to Artisans.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1935, The American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel was established in the United States (Olberding & Williams, 2010). This is the first known American organization that recognized the act of charitable efforts as a profession (Olberding & Williams, 2010). Over a span of 80 years, over 1.7 million tax-exempt (nonprofit) organizations have been founded in the U.S. (NCCS, 2015). Of these organizations, there are more than 40,000 registered nonprofits that focus their efforts in international communities (NCCS, 2015). As implied by its name, a nonprofit organization is “not-for-profit”; in other words, in order for the nonprofit sector to expand and grow, the organizations must look towards donors. According to Powell and Steinberg (2006, p. 28), “Historical analysis suggests that donor motives are usually...plural in nature.” Thus, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact cause of the rise of nonprofit organizations. Nonetheless, the number of American nonprofits continues to grow.

Aid to Artisans (ATA) is a nonprofit organization that attempts to inform its members, low-income international artisans, of its goal to help in expanding their businesses and in promoting their handicrafts in the American market. Since 1993, ATA offers assistance through its Market Readiness Program™, field-based customized training, and financial aid in international communities (ATA, 2015d).

In 2015, Aid to Artisans established Aid to ArtisansU (ATAU), an e-learning platform that fosters interaction between Aid to Artisans’ constituents, sponsors, and partnering communities. However, ATAU was not yet being used by the majority of Aid to Artisan members, and did not have a marketing plan to help raise awareness of this program. In fact, ATAU website was initially populated by the Creative Learning website developers and the

participants of ATA's Market Readiness Program™ (M. Obe, personal communication, October 1, 2015). Although this group included about 200 members (M. Obe, personal communication, October 5, 2015), the artisans were not aware that they had active accounts and had not used the website.

The goal of this project was to develop a marketing plan for Aid to Artisans' e-platform, Aid to ArtisansU (ATAU), to increase membership online. We accomplished this goal by evaluating ATAU's capacity to engage artisan leaders, retailers, and buyers through the current online format, and implemented short-term marketing strategies to update and publicize the website. We also presented long-term recommendations for future sustainability of the online platform, and compiled a list of sponsors to help finance it.

Chapter 2: Background

Aid to Artisans

Aid to Artisans (ATA) is a private, nonprofit alternative trade organization that specializes in business training, economic progress, and community development in the artisan industry. In October 2012, ATA became a division of Creative Learning, a non-profit concerned international development (PRNewswire, 2015). ATA’s mission is to provide onsite and online education, training, and resources to assist low-income artisans in developing countries in expanding their markets to the United States. Figure 1 illustrates the position of Aid to Artisans in relation to its parent organization, Creative Learning and Creative Associates.

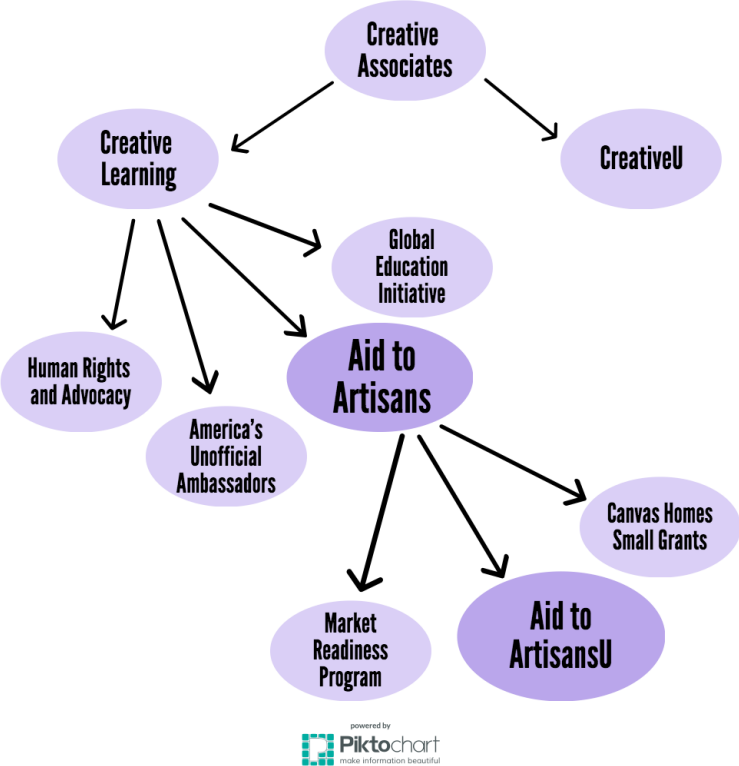


Figure 1: The organizational structure of Creative Associates and Aid to Artisans.

Since the establishment of ATA in 1976, the organization has expanded its reach and has developed effective strategies to accomplish its primary mission. ATA originally started with the mission of giving international artisans practical assistance selling their products, and importing their handicrafts to the United States. Aid to Artisans was determined to accomplish this by focusing on three main strategies: product development, market access, and business training (Artisans, 2015e). Product development addressed technical production, merchandising, packaging, and presentation. Market access involved the process of connecting artisans, retailers, and buyers in order to maximize the profitability of global artisan enterprises. Business training incorporated education and training programs that focused on assessing market readiness. These strategies helped guide ATA towards helping and designing a business model that is accessible to international artisans. The success of these strategies to help expand market access for individual artisans inspired a new direction for Aid to Artisans. In 2013, ATA launched its Canvas Home™ Small Grants Program. The program awards about 40 small grants to international artisan organizations in developing countries such as Kenya, Peru, Guatemala, Kyrgyz Republic, and Zimbabwe (Artisans, 2015e). ATA also began partnering with several organizations with overlapping values and goals, such as Hands of Hope Artisan Carvers Self-Help Group, The Lupane Women’s Center, PeaceQuilts, Inc. and Y’abal Handicrafts.

Step-by-step guidance and grant funding addressed short-term needs of artisans, but did not help with long-term market expansion. As such, ATA created customized training programs, ensuring that artisans could independently sustain a business. In 2015, Aid to Artisans established workshops and training sessions in China, Haiti, and Mexico. ATA also made use of its Market Readiness Program™ to help smaller companies to team up with recognized brands like Calvin Klein and Sundance as a way to expand the market accessed by artisans. ATA’s

personal training sessions and grants programs assist 125,000 artisans in 72 third world countries in developing the skills important for opening up opportunities for networks and partnerships.

Over the past 15 years, ATA has worked with a wide range of sponsors. The Pottery Workshop, for example, collaborated with ATA to increase the income of Tibetan artisans and improve their livelihoods. The Center for Enterprise Development and Big Lottery Fund has helped ATA fund workshops that helped HIV positive Haitian artisans to start their own businesses. Other organizations currently sponsoring ATA's efforts include BELTRAIDE, Creative Associates International, Highwayer Clays, Tewa Women United, Haiti Projects, Inc., and The Odyssey Center for Ceramic Arts (Artisans, 2015f).

In addition to the funds from these sponsors, ATA also received \$1.33 million in 2014 in contributions from other organizations and foundations that seek to promote fair trade practices and raise awareness about the benefits of international artisanal trade (M. Obe, personal communication, November 4, 2015). Fundación Fundemex has partnered with ATA to launch an entrepreneurial development initiative in Mexico. Other current prominent donors and contributors that are funding ATA include Belzeb Inc., Cerrejon Foundation, CREATA, the Boston Foundation, Centre for Enterprise Development, and Mambe (Artisans, 2015f). Although ATA has been able to expand its network and find connections to sponsor its efforts, it has not been able to do the same with its new technical website, Aid to ArtisansU.

Aid to ArtisansU

In a desire to continue to expand and meet the needs of artisans from around the world, ATA launched Aid to ArtisansU (ATAU) in August 2015. ATAU aims to educate artisans about international artisanal trade through online training courses offered on an electronic resource

platform. The courses address the benefits and practices of promoting artisanal goods in the American market. In addition, the e-platform provides a networking space for international artisans, retailers, and buyers_(Artisans, 2015a). This e-platform aims to connect different sectors of the artisanal community to share and foster ideas for economic transformations. With ATAU only in its first few months of operation, a marketing strategy has yet to be developed. Details regarding what resources are currently available on the website are further outlined in

Identifying the product.

Formulating a marketing strategy for a nonprofit organization

A marketing strategy for a nonprofit organization involves five key and interrelated steps: defining a mission, identifying the products, understanding market demographics, publicizing, and identifying funding (see Figure 2, adapted from public relations expert and author Sandra Beckwith (2006).

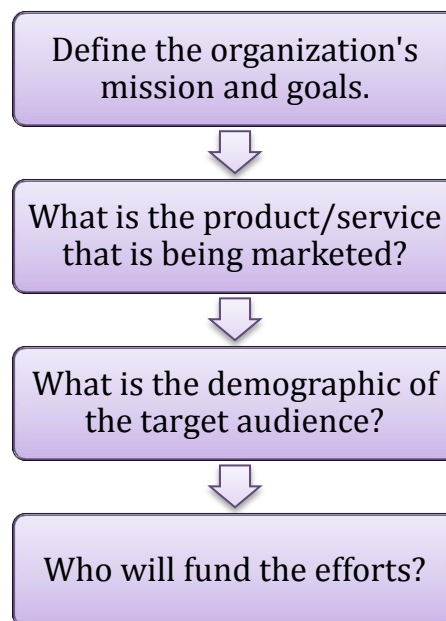


Figure 2: Questions to consider when developing a marketing plan.

Step 1: Defining a mission

First, establishing a clear organizational goal allows beneficiaries to make an informed decision whether or not they wish to engage with the organization (Dees, 1998). In addition, as noted by Dees, associate professor at Harvard Business School, nonprofits may limit their chances to receive full financial assistance from potential sponsors if they do not have a clearly defined mission statement (Dees, 1998, p. 62). Without a cause, there is no motivation to donate or join the organization.

Step 2: Identifying the product

The organization must then clearly define the products and or services offered in order to reach the right market. Certain products, such as a new initiative or program, are publicized in a different manner than a new car model might. Understanding the aspects of the product will help an organization direct its efforts and strategically publicize the product while minimizing the costs of advertising. There are a few questions to consider when identifying the product:

- “Where does the [product] fit into the organization’s strategic plan?” (Beckwith, 2006, p. 5)
- “How attractive is the [product] to other potential competitors?” (Mcleish, 2010, p. 55)
- “What trends does the [product] exhibit?” (Mcleish, 2010, p. 55)

All of these questions address key elements of a product and whether a product can be successful.

Step 3: Understanding the target audience

The target audience for nonprofit organizations includes four different groups: clients, constituents (people who purchase their products), volunteers, and donors (Mcleish, 2010).

Nonprofits serve their clients through their mission, services, and products. A nonprofit must

determine the varied interests of its target audience(s). Business analysts Lazarevski and Dolnicar (2009, p.227) argue that a nonprofit's "mission statement is defined in advance and cannot be changed in dependence of market needs." However, an audience's interests can be utilized to engage members into using the organization's resources. Therefore, Step 3 in a marketing strategy involves both identifying and understanding the organization's potential target audience(s).

Authors Bouette and Magee (2015, p. 343) categorize small business owners into "hobbyists, artisans, and entrepreneurs." Hobbyists are considered to be those in the sector that have a constant rate of production but do not have a registered business; artisans are craftspeople that want to "develop their business but have many internal barriers to traditional growth", while entrepreneurs are company owners and understand how to/can expand production (Bouette & Magee, 2015, p. 344).

The artisans in Aid to Artisans' target client demographic can be similarly subcategorized into traditional artisans and artisan leaders (Nureen Das and M. Obe, personal communication, November 12, 2015). These two groups can be likened to the respective classification levels of hobbyists, artisans, and entrepreneurs; Aid to Artisans further defines artisan leaders as those who speak English, are technologically skilled, and business savvy (N. Das & M. Obe, personal communication, November 12, 2015). Moreover, "Artisans do not essentially acquire their skills through formal education, rather they are apprenticed to individuals who are already skillful in their works of interest" (Ukachi, p. 579). Artisan leaders use resources available through Aid to Artisans and Aid to ArtisansU and offer their assistance in the business development of rural artisans and artisan producers.

Step 4: Publicizing the organization

Step 4 in a marketing strategy involves planning publication methods. Advertising is segmented into divisions based on product type, locality, target audience, business type, and level of marketing. These divisions include mass marketing, direct marketing, cause-related marketing, and social-media marketing. Mass marketing is implemented when there is a large geographic or communication gap between a company/organization and the public (Burnett, 2001). For mass marketing to be successful there must be an established customer base (Burnett, 2001). On the other hand, direct marketing involves personal contact between the public and the organization. An established customer base is not necessary. In addition, such direct engagement allows for personalizing the organizations marketing message to the potential constituent (Burnett, 2001). Social media marketing “is the use of social media to facilitate exchanges between consumers and organizations” (Tuten & Solomon, 2014). Varadarajan and Menon (1988, p. 61) define cause-related marketing (CRM) as a relationship between two entities, usually a corporate firm and a nonprofit organization, where the “firm’s contribution to a cause is contingent upon a consumer engaging in a revenue-producing transaction with the firm.”

Since the creation of websites such as MySpace and LinkedIn in the early 2000s, social media websites have become an extremely successful form of communication (Hendricks 2013). In Jones’ *The Growth of Social Media* (2013), social networking site traffic by all Internet users has risen from just 8% in 2008 to 72% of users in 2013. In fact, this dramatic growth has persuaded “93% of marketers [to] use social media for business.” According to Digital Marketing Ramblings writer Craig Smith (2015d), Facebook has a current user count of “1.4 billion monthly active users,” followed by LinkedIn with a base of “380 million users,”(2015c) Twitter with “316 million monthly active users,” and Google+ with “300 million active users”

(2015a). Social media sites offer “online floor spaces” to businesses; the websites provide an online platform to display and relay the business’ information to an audience. Given the extensive usage of such social networking platforms, an organization can influence its reputation and connect to a larger audience by engaging with its online user community.

Social media sites also make use of incentives to attract Internet users and followers. Dr. Saravankumar (2012) details how a business could use Facebook through promotion, crowdsourcing, check-ins, and social shopping. A company’s Facebook page could have special deals for those who like and follow the page. For example, Goodwill Manassas Retail Store offered a ten percent discount on the total if the customer liked the company’s Facebook page. Crowdsourcing is a method used by businesses to acquire needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people. An example of crowdsourcing is crowdfunding, which "is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising monetary contributions from a large number of people, typically via the Internet" (Song, Lee, Lo, & Lee, 2015). A customer shares his/her experience and writes reviews seen by hundreds of new possible customers by a simple post online. Properly using Facebook can significantly grow a business’s customer base and improve its interaction with its constituents. With these improvements, one could see a more engaged and supportive member base.

On the other hand, Twitter is a micro-blogging site, a platform where posts are limited to 140 characters. With Twitter, a company/organization can generate buzz, stay on top of the competition, and connect with customers (Saravanakumar & Sugantha Lakshmi, 2012). To generate buzz, a company/organization can create a hashtag to promote a product, idea, or cause. For instance, ALS Association created the hashtag and challenge #ALSIceBucketChallenge. People would post a video of a bucket of iced water being poured over their head. At the end of the video, they would challenge three other people to either donate to the ALS Association or

complete the challenge. By word-to-mouth, the ALS Association was able to raise \$115 million for ALS research (ALS Ice Bucket Challenge-FAQ, 2015). Although micro-blogging could present its own set of limitations, Twitter can be helpful in spreading the word in short bursts of information with catchy phrases.

Cause-related marketing (CRM) is a marketing strategy in which a firm funds a nonprofit. In return, the firm requests that consumers buy its products. There are many reasons that a corporate firm can choose to initiate a cause-related marketing program (CRMP), the “most important [being] economic motivation” (Whitehouse and Husted. 2002, p. 7).

CRMPs have proven very effective in past years, helping non-profits receive money through donations in a way that is beneficial for both the organization and its constituents. In a 1983 case study cited by Varadarajan and Menon (1988), American Express Company launched a marketing program that donated a penny for every dollar spent towards renovating the Statue of Liberty. Since the beginning of American Express’ program, it has “had a 28% increase in card usage over the same period in 1982 and an increase in the number of new cards issued” (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988, p. 59). After spending \$6 million on the program, American Express was able to give \$1.7 million dollars to the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). American Express’ marketing program enabled the firm to gain more customers and increase membership, while the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Foundation received \$1.7 million dollars for its renovations.

Finally, search engines have become a source for seeking online information. Search engines such as Google are constantly being used, with Google receiving an average of 11.944 billion searches a month (Smith, 2015b). Ravi Sen’s *Optimal Search Engine Marketing Strategy* outlines a few different options when using search engines for marketing purposes (2005). These

methods include “keyword-related banner advertisements, paid placements (PP), and search engine optimization (SEO)” (Sen, 2005, p. 10).

Organizations can pay for prime retail/guaranteed high rankings on search engine websites through paid placements. Rather than being found only on keyword-related pages, paid placements are displayed on the front page of online search results (Sen, 2005). According to Bandyopadhyay, Hess, Jaisingh, and Sen (2008), a website can “increase targeted visitors, branding, and reputation” solely from paid placements. An organization can pay higher costs for a higher ranking: conversely, a nonprofit can opt for a regular ranking and pay less money.

As ATA seeks to expand its market and improve ATAU, collaborating with similar organizations will help Aid to ArtisansU expand its network and develop its operations. Three organizations we have worked with are WEConnect International, Empowered Women International, and the Artesan Gateway (see **Understanding the target audience**).

Empowered Women International

Empowered Women International (EWI) is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C. According to its website, Empowered Women hopes to “create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for immigrant, refugee, low-income, and at-risk women in the Greater Washington D.C. Metro Area” (Empowered Women International, 2015). The women in Empowered Women International’s network have established/are establishing enterprises that are in the retail market sector. In other words, these enterprises sell products such as textiles, art, clothing, books, and/or specialty foods. EWI provides entrepreneur training and mentoring, and sales opportunities in order to provide holistic assistance in the business development process (Empowered Women International, 2015). A large part of their efforts is geared towards “long-

term community impact” and to “creating pathways to self-sufficiency and citizenship” (Empowered Women International, 2015).

WEConnect International

WEConnect International’s (WCI’s) mission is to educate, register, and certify women-owned enterprises, and to connect them to bigger corporate buyers (WEConnect International, 2014b). Any women-owned enterprise can register with WCI’s e-Network. By registering with WCI, members gain access to a larger network of businesses and corporate partners, training modules, and the opportunity to attend WCI conferences. In these conferences, WCI provides matchmaking meetings to connect the women with corporate buyers. After being registered, the enterprise can be certified. The certification proves that the business has “51% ownership by one or more women, day to day and long term control and management of the business by one or more women, contribution of capital and/or expertise by women, [and] is operated independently from other non-certified businesses” (WEConnect International, 2014a). These requirements were developed with WCI corporate partners. By being certified, the business receives a unique



WCI/WBNEC woman-owned logo.

women-owned business logo developed by WCI with Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBNEC) (K. Murphy, personal communication, November 6, 2015).

Step 5: Locating sponsors

The final step of a nonprofit's marketing plan is locating sponsors to fund the organization's programs and services. Although nonprofit organizations benefit from tax exemptions and can receive free labor through volunteers, all businesses have "high startup costs and capital investments" (Dees, 1998, p. 58). Therefore, nonprofits must look to donors and sponsors for funding their operations. Before selecting sponsors, an organization should understand all potential financial relationships. Funding can come from individuals, larger corporations or companies, and/or other nonprofit organizations. From these options, the organization can choose a combination of sources that is cost-effective for both parties.

Our Project Timeline

The five steps outlined above have been developed into chronological timeline, illustrated in Figure 3. Each step in the process is specifically directed towards marketing for Aid to ArtisansU.



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Figure 3. Projected steps in developing a marketing strategy for Aid to ArtisansU.

Chapter 3: Our Project

Defining the mission

According to the ATAU website (2015a), its mission is to “offer short, high quality online courses relevant to artisan-based enterprises, and the opportunity to connect and share with others in the sector.” Aid to ArtisansU also has courses that serve as a basic foundation for potential applicants for ATA’s Market Readiness Program™ (M. Obe, personal communication, November 6, 2015). This mission served as the foundation for our research and strategy recommendations.

Identifying the product

We conducted semi-structured interviews with the ATAU web development team in order to identify the product and to understand the initial goals of the e-platform. The ATAU web development team is a group of product managers and consultants within the programs and operations division of Creative Associates. This team also works on creating and updating online platforms associated with Creative Associates, such as websites for CreativeU, ATAU, and the Dropout Prevention Lab (M. McCabe, personal communication, October 26, 2015). Furthermore, the team works in conjunction with website developers at Shift E-Learning, a company based in Cairo, Egypt which strives to create an “advanced e-learning experiences and social learning environments” for organizations worldwide (Shift E-Learning, 2015). While we worked directly with the Creative Associate professionals in Washington, D.C. during our project, we also emailed our major technical recommendations (see **Updating the website: technical recommendations**) to the Shift E-Learning team.

The first meeting was a preliminary session in which the ATAU team went through all facets of the current website design. Based on this interaction, we created guided questions for our follow-up meeting, and made initial technical recommendations to the staff. The proposed interview questions were chosen to improve our understanding of all the resources on the website and to give us insight into what ATA hoped to achieve with the different aspects of the ATAU website (see **Appendix A**).

We also created our own profiles in order to grasp the full extent of the resources available to members. We signed up for accounts, completed courses online, and categorized pre-existing courses to form our content recommendations. Currently, all members of Aid to ArtisansU have access to 50 free online business modules. These modules are primarily courses that are comprised of a slideshow and a final exam. Of the available modules, only one, the “Market Readiness Introductory Course,” was developed by ATA. All other courses are modules provided by other organizations as free resources for ATAU to use on its platform. Some courses that are available on the website include “Customer Service,” “Information Processing and Management,” and “PowerPoint Basics.”

Understanding the target audience

In order to gauge what viewers think of the current website and how it can be improved, we created online surveys consisting of a combination of opinion and free-listing questions. The main demographic of Aid to Artisans consists of international users who are not easily accessible for sampling; therefore, we also sent surveys to Washington D.C. artisans who fit a similar profile: essentially, those who own small businesses and would like to expand their business within the United States market (see **Appendix C**). The questions in the survey changed based on whether or not the respondent was already a member of the ATA community.

Despite our team's effort to send reminders to complete our survey, we did not receive responses from the artisans. We realized that our target audience is not likely to fill out surveys and provide detailed information without personal interaction; rather, personal interactions ensured a level of comfort between us and the artisans, and we were able to receive some feedback about the website through conversation. During our conversations, we geared the discussion towards questions we would have asked in our online survey (see Appendix B). Moreover, after speaking with professionals from various nonprofit organizations, we found that they had knowledge about the needs of the artisans and buyers, and could provide us with the same information. We spoke with multiple nonprofit organizations that work with small businesses entrepreneurs including WEConnect International, Empowered Women International, and Faire Collection.

We also scheduled a phone interview with Nureen Das, a Managing Associate at Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group and a professional within the artisan industry. Aside from working as a senior recruiter at a firm, she was also a Market Readiness Program™ participant and started her own online platform, The Artesan Gateway, with the goal of fostering interaction and networking among retailers, buyers, and artisan producers. We asked questions about her experiences with starting a platform and about her success with engaging the community (see **Appendix F**). After speaking with her, we created a 1-page question and answer summary that was featured on her [blog](#). According to Nureen Das, the target audience of ATAU includes members from three different groups: artisan leaders, retailers, and buyers (Personal communication, November 12, 2015). Thus, we created a contact list of any potential members that fall within these categories; we sorted through three lists and subdivided larger lists into five different spreadsheets: “Artisan Leaders, Buyers, Designers, Potential Sponsors, and Similar Organizations.” For example, emails of the Market Readiness Program™ participants were

included in the “Artisan” list. All contacts received individualized emails to highlight the benefits of ATAU specific to their role in the artisan industry, and to encourage them to sign up for an account with Aid to Artisans U (see **Appendix D**).

Advertising

We had multiple opportunities to present ATAU to different groups, including craft shows, company presentations, and videoconference calls.

Craft shows

On November 15th, 2015, we attended Empowered Women International's craft show. This event was held in the Civic Center in Silver Springs, Maryland. 30 women artisans set up small booths at the venue and showcased their products for buyers (see Figures 5 and 6). At the craft show, we handed out flyers to the artisans (see **Appendix E**). These flyers provided general information about the resources on the website and a link to signing up for the website. Because we had limited time to speak with each artisan, we were unable to conduct our interviews at the craft show. We introduced Aid to Artisans and its mission, while briefly mentioning the available resources on Aid to ArtisansU to 12 different artisan leaders at the show. Afterwards, we collected business cards and put the new contact information into the Aid to Artisans contact database.



Figures 5/6. Pictures of ATAU Team with artisans showcasing at EWI craft show.

From December 14-18th, 2015, Aid to Artisans hosted their annual holiday craft sale. At this event, we saw the entire office convert from an office space to a marketplace, where they showcased products from artisans based all around the world, including India, Nepal, Egypt, Burkina Faso, and Mozambique (see Figures 7/8). This event was open for the public to attend and buy products at. Moreover, Aid to Artisans promoted its “Sponsor an Artisan” program, where we asked for additional donations from customers to sponsor an artisan to come to ATA’s Market Readiness Program™. Donations between \$10-\$100 were made. During our last few days in the office, our team assisted with set-up of the craft sale and with the customers themselves.



Figures 7/8. WPI team helps with holiday craft sale product set-up.

Company presentations

We met with senior program coordinators Liz Cullen Whitehead and Kerry Murphy from WEConnect International, Nureen Das, owner of The Artesan Gateway, Mary Louise Marino from Empowered Women International, and Joy Bittner from Faire Collection in order to present ATAU and to explore possibilities about potential future connections.

On November 16th, 2016, we conducted an interview with Liz Cullen Whitehead, Director of Women's Business Development at WEConnect International. We presented ATAU's platform and its available online resources. We proceeded to introduce the idea of partnering ATAU and WCI. Partnering of both organizations will provide woman entrepreneurs access to obtain a certification for their business through WEConnect International. The semi-structured interview was successful in identifying potential opportunities to connect ATAU with WEConnect International. Following the interview, we sent an email to Liz Cullen with detailed information of the platform that could be used to promote ATAU. She provided us with a small informational paragraph regarding WCI's new platform. Articles written for the featured nonprofit organizations and for Aid to ArtisansU are included in Appendix J.

We set up a meeting with Mary Louise Marino, Program Manager for EWI. We traveled to EWI's headquarters in Rockville, Maryland on December 3, 2015 to give our general ATAU presentation. This provided us with the opportunity to expand our network and collaborate with EWI in their services. After the presentation, we received more feedback and suggestions for the website. We discussed with Mary Louise the possibility of directing potential members of EWI to ATAU for basic training prior to applying for EWI's more advance learning courses.

Videoconference calls

On November 18th, 2015, we prepared a presentation about the benefits of Aid to Artisans U to 25 South African artisans over a videoconference call. This same presentation was used to present ATAU to businesswomen in Empowered Women International's network. For both presentations, we followed up with an email that provided additional information about ATAU and hyperlinks to sign up for an account.

In order to advertise ATAU, we conducted a semi-structured interview via video chat with Paola Martinez, a student ambassador working with Aid to Artisans in Puebla, Mexico. We asked her questions regarding her experience with Aid to Artisans (see **Appendix G**). Her comments and testimony were used as quotes for developing our idea of Aid to ArtisansU Abroad (see **Aid to ArtisansU Abroad**).

Through our research, we connected with Joy Bittner, Director of Ecuador Operations of Faire Collection on December 1, 2014. She works to create connections between the rural artisans with potential buyers, and helps to create their products to post on Faire's e-commerce website (J. Bittner, personal communication, December 1, 2015). Faire is an e-commerce organization that works with artisans in Ecuador, Vietnam, and Swaziland to help them sell their products. After sending her an initial email regarding ATAU's general resources, Joy responded with interest and a Skype videoconference call was set up. We presented ATA and ATAU with a general overview, and completed the videoconference call by asking for her feedback regarding resources on the website (see **Appendix L**). We asked her what resources or changes would help make Aid to ArtisansU more accessible for rural artisans. She discussed with us the artisans' interests in receiving certifications from different courses they have taken. She also mentioned the term "coach-surfing," where buyers who have had experiences with a specific artisan can comment on the quality of the relationship, and emphasized that "coach-surfing" is an extremely helpful tool for buyers when they are looking for artisans (J. Bittner, personal communication, December 1, 2015).

Locating sponsors

Additional archival research on specific companies and firms were completed in order to gain a better understanding of what strategies will work to receive funding for the ATAU

website. To search for sponsors we used the Foundation Center, an online database of all organizations, corporations, and foundations that provide funding and grants to nonprofit organizations (The Foundation Center, 1956). Potential donors for ATAU are corporations or foundations that have Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSRs) geared towards providing grants for projects similar to ATAU. We used advanced searching, keywords, and different filters in order to compile a list of potential donors. There are two ways to search for sponsors through the Foundation Center database: “Search Grantmakers,” and “Search Grants.”

Because ATAU is such a unique project that can fall under many different categories, we searched for donors using a variety of subjects. We narrowed our results using keywords that related to ATAU’s missions, such as “non-governmental organizations, education services, adult education, e-learning, international development, global programs, entrepreneurship, and arts and culture.” We also turned the “Accepting Applications” filter on during our search; this filter would remove any foundations or donors that were not currently accepting grant proposals or applications, and the foundations that does not donate to ATAU’s sector.

We also looked into Hogram’s *Annual Register of Grant Support* (2015) and Search Grant’s online database (2015) as sources for donors. These sources list all the foundations and companies that gave our grants within a specific year. The texts are chronologically and alphabetically ordered for the reader. Similar to the Foundation Center, it outlines the company’s CSR and their profile for a recipient.

We created an Excel spreadsheet for the list of donors with categories such as “Name of donor, Types of projects, Recipient Location, Type of Grant Proposal, and Due Date of Grant.” The donors were researched and sorted from all the databases and sources listed above. After speaking with our sponsor, we highlighted these categories as the most useful pieces of information when applying for grants or for funding with a foundation. The proposed list of

sponsors was given to Aid to Artisans, while an edited version of the list can be seen in Appendix N. The edited version does not include private information, such as contact and financial information, we gathered from the Foundation Center. From this list, we identified four sponsors that would be the primary candidates for funding Aid to ArtisansU.

Updating the website: technical recommendations

We worked with ATAU web consultants Akhil Khurana, Kristen Moses, and Gina Assaf in the implementation of our website formatting changes. Two major modifications that we completed in Washington, D.C. include an online badge system and the creation of the Introduction to Market Readiness Course series.

The ATAU website has a badge system that was underutilized; ideally, a member can receive an online badge on his/her profile once they have completed a series of courses within that subject. However, since the creation of the website in August 2015, the badge system has not been updated or developed. After realizing the success from the women-owned logo with WCI (see **WEConnect International**), we believed a badge system would serve as an incentive for members to continue completing courses on the ATAU website.

First, we created a list of all the available courses on Aid to ArtisansU. From this list, we grouped courses together based on its importance to a specific business skill. We used subject



“Create a Website” badge.

headings such as “How to Present,” “Create a Website,” and “Customer Management.” There are between two to eight courses within in each course series (see **Appendix K**). The badges serve as a motivation for members to engage in the courses provided by ATAU. A badge acts as a “trophy” or “sticker certification” that can be viewed on a member’s

online profile. The system was designed to illustrate a member’s knowledge within a specific subject, and to interest artisans to take the courses. The idea of creating badges originated from the website of CreativeU. The badges were designed with simple graphics so that all users could understand the subject of the badge, regardless of education level. For example, the “Create a Website” Badge has a symbol of a computer, a globally recognizable image for the use of technology and the Internet. The other 10 badges that were developed for the website and their course descriptions can be seen in **Appendix M**.

The “Intro to Market Readiness” Badge is the signature course series that we developed for Aid to Artisans. This series includes two primary courses: “Market Readiness Introductory Course” and the “Exporting to the U.S. Retail Market” course. The Market Readiness Introductory Course was developed by ATA, and we created the Exporting to the U.S. Retail Market Course (see Figure 9).



Figure 9. Title slide for the “Exporting to the U.S. Retail Market” Course.

This course is a PowerPoint slideshow overview of the key components needed to develop successful relationships with U.S. buyers and serves as a checklist to measure an artisan's exporting knowledge. The information within the module was derived from Aid to Artisans' Export Manual (2004), our project sponsor Maud Obe, and from Carol MacNulty, Director of the Market Readiness Program. Along with these courses, we added pre-existing courses we identified as good resources for market readiness, such as "Information Management and Processing" and "Exploring Intercultural Communications." These courses provide basic information about accessing the U.S. Retail Market, identifying an artisan's target buyer, and building a successful export business. The main focus of these courses is to provide a foundation for ATA's Market Readiness Program.

Evaluation of short-term recommendations

We used open rates, bounce rates, and click rates for email evaluations through Gmail with Streak and Constant Contact, and website view evaluation using Google Analytics. The open rate of an email is defined as the ratio between the number of emails opened and the number of total emails sent out. Bounce rates include emails that were returned to the sender due to an incorrect email address, and the click rate is the number of times a recipient clicks on the included hyperlinks.

Mass email evaluation

	<u>General</u>	<u>Buyers/Retailers</u>	<u>Artisans</u>	<u>MRP Participants</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Sent</u>	93	307	245	101	746
<u>Opened</u>	7	69	61	39	176
<u>Clicks</u>	1	7	11	6	25
<u>Bounced</u>	8	4	8	7	25
<u>Did Not Open</u>	78	233	158	55	524

Figure 10. Resultant statistics of emails sent out to ATA database.

Emails regarding Aid to ArtisansU were sent through two different mailing platforms: Gmail with Streak (Ismail & Mawani, 2012) and Constant Contact (Goodman, 2004). Constant Contact (Goodman, 2004) is an online platform that is advertised as an organization’s “Personal Marketing Manager.” In other words, it provides mass emailing and social media services for small businesses. Aid to Artisans uses Constant Contact’s emailing services in order to send

emails to every contact in their database easily. Through this platform, an organization can also view an email’s open rate, bounce rate, and click rate. The results of our emails have been compiled in Figure 10. The total open rate of our emails is about 24%, which can be compared to ATA’s average open rate of 20%, and a nonprofit industry average open rate of 30.88% (Constant Contact, 2015).

Google Analytics evaluation

We used Google Analytics because it was already set-up by Aid to Artisans for the platform. We defined our strategies as successful if Google Analytics illustrated a spike in usage of the website shortly after implementation of a marketing strategy. We created rules within Google Analytics to filter out network traffic through the IP address at the ATA office in Washington D.C. These rules provided more accurate results in site usage. The web reports we looked at included the “Audience Overview, Active Users, Location, and Behavior Flow” reports. These four reports provided us a general understanding of site usage through members. The Audience Overview report provided a line graph with daily data points for the number of user sessions (see Figure 10). According to Google Analytics, one session is defined as “a time based expiration (after 30 minutes of inactivity or at midnight), or a campaign change (if a user arrives via one campaign, leaves, and then comes back via a different campaign” (Google Analytics, 2015).

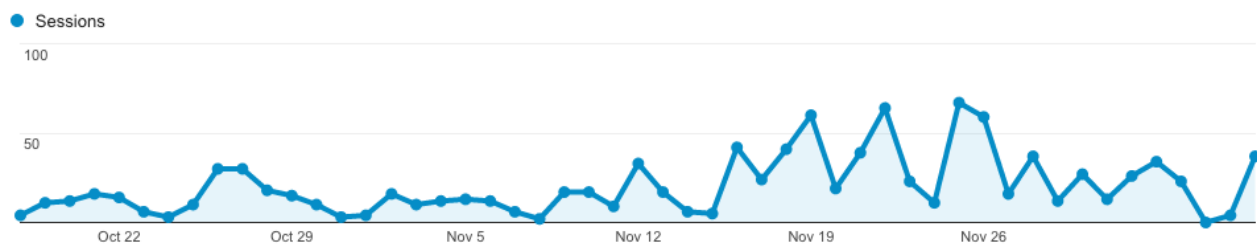


Figure 11. Overall trend in daily sessions during ATAU project (October-December).

From October to November 14th, the website averaged 13 sessions. This time frame illustrates a constant usage rate, with no apparent spikes in sessions. The EWI craft show, our first marketing event for ATA, occurred on November 15th. Immediately after advertising at the craft show, we noticed a rise in the number of sessions from five to 42 sessions (see Figure 11).

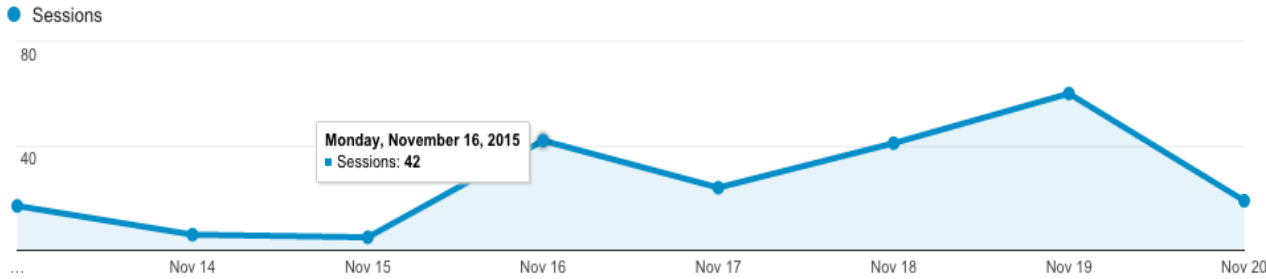


Figure 12. Number of daily sessions from November 14th-November 20th.

According to Google Analytics (see Figures 12 and 13), our marketing efforts have expanded the ATAU geographic reach from 40 countries to 68 countries. Over the first seven weeks since the launch of Aid to ArtisansU, there was 342 sessions and 195 new users (see Figure 12). After the EWI craft show on November 15th, there has been 677 sessions and 443 new users (see Figure 14). However, there has been a much higher bounce rate (73.86%) than the rate prior to audience engagement with the ATAU website (46.49%).

	<u>October 1st –November 13th, 2015</u>			
<u>Top 5 Countries</u>	<u>Sessions</u>	<u>% New Sessions</u>	<u>New Users</u>	<u>Bounce Rate</u>
United States	191	49.74%	95	39.27%
Egypt	45	46.67%	21	37.78%
India	15	86.67%	13	73.33%
Mexico	10	100.00%	10	60.00%
United Kingdom	9	77.78%	7	66.67%
<u>Total (All 40 Countries)</u>	342	57.02%	195	46.49%

Figure 13. Geographic resulting statistics from Google Analytics on Aid to ArtisansU.

	<u>November 14th - December 2nd, 2015</u>			
<u>Top 5 Countries</u>	<u>Sessions</u>	<u>% New Sessions</u>	<u>New Users</u>	<u>Bounce Rate</u>
United States	249	55.42%	138	61.04%
(not set)*	87	97.70%	85	100.00%
Russia	61	3.28%	2	93.44%
India	21	71.43%	15	38.10%
China	20	95.00%	9	95.00%
<u>Total (All 68 Countries)</u>	677	65.44%	443	73.86%

Figure 14. Change in Google Analytics after first marketing strategy at craft show.

Cost-benefit analysis

We presented a list of costs for any website recommendations that required a budget (see Figure 15). The budget included upfront costs for technical updates and monthly membership fees associated with the online software. Illustrating to potential sponsors and ATA our low-cost website suggestions with a positive impact on ATAU membership will appeal to the economic motivation factor in sponsor accumulation.

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Free Version</u>	<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Paid Version</u>	<u>Benefits</u>
Versal (Freund, 2012)	\$0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlimited anonymous learners • Course creation and gadgets • Course embedding • Accepted format by ATAU 	\$100/month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private courses • Learner Invites • Multiple admins • Learner tracking
<u>Hootsuite*</u> (Holmes & Tedman, 2008)	\$0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Social profiles • Basic Analytics • Basic Message Scheduling • Access to basic apps 	\$9.99/month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 Different social profiles • Enhanced Analytics report • Advanced Message Scheduling • 2 Administrators
<u>Piktochart*</u> (Goh & Zaggia, 2012)	\$0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free templates available • Full editing functions • Access to Piktochart icons • Share original size • Piktochart logo must be included 	\$39.99/year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All templates are available • Watermark removal • Integrated export platforms • High-quality PDF exports
Languages	\$0.00		\$1,000- \$2,000/language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal to a larger global audience
<u>Total Cost</u>	\$0.00		\$2,359.87- \$3,359.87/year	

Figure 15. Cost-benefit analysis for ATAU recommendations.

Sustainability of the platform

Since Aid to Artisans is a small organization with only two program coordinators under the ATA umbrella, we realized that it was important to consider ways to automate updates of the platform and provide recommendations for future marketing strategies. These recommendations were provided through social media and email templates, as well as the development of our idea, Aid to ArtisansU Abroad.

Social Media Templates

During our conference call with Nureen Das, we discussed the importance of engaging with your target audience online. Thus, we created social media templates similar to Figure 16 (see **Appendix H**). The social media posts can be used on Aid to Artisans' Facebook, Twitter, and/or Instagram pages, and include general information such as the organization name, the website URL, and quick key words (Learn, Connect, and Share) about the platform. The designs were made to be visually appealing so ATA's online audience is more inclined to stop and look at the post. The templates were given to Aid to Artisans to use as needed.



Figure 16. Example of our social media posts for Aid to Artisans.

One social media template was posted on Facebook to serve as a reminder about joining ATAU. The post received two shares on Facebook (both by other Creative Learning divisions), and a total of 18 likes, 14 of which were liked by staff of Aid to Artisans or of Creative Learning.

After uploading the new articles to the ATAU website, we sent out a social media post on Facebook and Twitter (see Figure 17). This post redirected to the new article available on ATAU about The Artesan Gateway. This post received six likes and one comment. Moreover, after posting this update on Facebook on December 7, 2015, there was a spike in the number of page views on the website, from four views to 44 views (see **Google Analytics evaluation**).



Figure 17. Social media post following addition of article on ATAU website.

Aid to ArtisansU Abroad

Aid to ArtisansU is an important technological tool for artisans; however, a large part of the ATA audience has had limited interaction with technology. Although artisan leaders are

encouraged to sign up on behalf of the rural artisans they work with, we felt that a small group of students who worked to assist artisan leaders in teaching them about the resources on ATAU would prove beneficial for the use and marketing of the platform. Thus, we developed the idea of Aid to ArtisansU Abroad. The primary mission for this initiative is to collaborate with students, both domestically and internationally, to teach international artisans how to take advantage of ATAU. The students would travel to different international communities and teach the artisans how to use the platform and its resources.

Our videoconference call with Joy Bittner (see **Appendix L**) developed the idea to expand the program to design students attending U.S. universities. While some students can offer technical assistance for artisans and teach them how to use the platform, design students can help the artisans with strategies to better photograph their products, and/or create “contemporary” merchandise catered to the U.S. retail market (J. Bittner, personal communication, December 1, 2015).

After discussing our initial idea with our sponsor, we discovered that we needed to find concrete examples of the benefits ATAU Abroad can offer the students. On November 18th, 2015, we conducted a semi-structured interview with Paola Martinez, a student intern working with Aid to Artisans in Puebla, Mexico. We asked her questions related to her project in Mexico and her opinions on how her work with Aid to Artisans has benefitted her as a student. A few important ideas that came up during the interview included the consideration of credit requirement as an incentive for students, and highlighting the value and preservation of culture for the people who could be interested in this project (see **Appendix G**). Paola directly worked with rural artisans in Chiapas, Mexico, and completed fieldwork with artisans in Puebla, Mexico. We emailed her our interview questions so she can ask the rural artisans in the communities on

our behalf (see **Appendix I**). We used quotes from this interview as a testimonial for the marketing flyers for Aid to ArtisansU Abroad.

Chapter 4: Final recommendations

The following suggestions are recommended for Aid to Artisans to consider and/or implement in the future in order to continue technical development of Aid to ArtisansU and marketing for the website. Our final recommendations can be subcategorized into three fields: website maintenance and updates, communicating with members, and marketing and networking.

Website maintenance and updates

- 1. We recommend creating a new resource on the website: a Google Calendar (Google, 2006) on the main landing page of the website.**

At the EWI craft show, we talked with artisans who emphasized the importance of creating personal connections and having face-to-face interactions with potential buyers in business development. According to the artisans, this would increase trust between artisans and buyers. Thus, we felt that an events calendar on the ATAU website would be beneficial for the users. This events calendar would be continuously updated with different nationwide trade shows events, as well as programs and events held by Aid to Artisans. There are a variety of options for calendar plug-ins; however, the calendar that is easy to upload, free, and requires minimal technical modification is a Google Calendar (Google, 2006). The Google Calendar can be easily embedded into the website's "Resources" page as an article and if considered, on the landing page of the ATAU website.

2. For ATAU interns, we recommend they reach out to nonprofit organizations in the area and write articles about them, and/or conduct research on business development topics such as quality control and pricing for the next set of ATAU articles.

The professionals we spoke with during our videoconference calls and company presentations indicated that many artisans attempting to export to the U.S. are not fully aware about the intricacies of quality control, production costs, and pricing products. Therefore, we suggest that the interns look into these subjects for resources and discussion topics:

- Quality Control: Understanding the management tools necessary to produce consistent and high-quality merchandise.
- Costing and Pricing: Pricing your product and how to determine an accurate production cost.
- Time Management: How to meet tight deadlines and determining realistic timelines for your production team.

Any article uploads or completed technical updates to the ATAU website should be followed up with a social media post that hyperlinks to the new resource. We found that this is a successful tactic to get recurring visitors to the website (see **Social Media Templates**). We created a list of complete responsibilities for any ATAU interns (see **Appendix P**).

3. We recommend using free or low-cost online resources such as [Piktochart](#), [Versal](#), and [Hootsuite](#) for visually appealing and scheduled updates for the platform.

Conference calls and meetings with multiple nonprofit organizations revealed that artisans respond better to visual learning as opposed to large amounts of texts in courses, as well as continual reminders about ATAU as a resource. In order to create visually interesting deliverables, such as the “Exporting to the U.S. Retail Market” course, and various flyers and pamphlets we used Piktochart (Goh & Zaggia, 2012). Piktochart (Goh & Zaggia, 2012) has easy-

to-use templates to create media that is free for members. However, for more capabilities and more freedom with template formatting, we suggest ATA consider Piktochart's discounted Pro membership for nonprofits. This cost can be seen in our Cost-benefit analysis.

Similar to Piktochart, Versal is an online tool that helps users create interactive and engaging courses free of cost (Freund, 2012). Although Versal was not suited for developing the "Exporting to the U.S. Retail Market" course, it can help the ATAU web development team create interactive modules for the artisans. Moreover, Versal is an accepted format for courses on the ATAU website. The video that illustrates how a course can be created on Versal can be found [here](#). The artisans will be inclined to take courses and retain the information if the courses are visually engaging.

Hootsuite is an online application that was created for social media management (Holmes, Meli, & Tedman, 2008). By signing up for a free membership, you receive access to scheduling posts to three different social media accounts from Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram (Holmes, Meli, & Tedman, 2008). This tool can be a useful resource to automate quick reminders and general posts about ATAU.

4. We recommend creating a separate administrator account/profile for ATAU. We suggest that the administrator is available to update resources and write articles for the platform monthly.

A separate administrator account for the website could prove useful when responding to general inquiries, discussions or comments, and accessing the administrative side of ATAU. During our project, we received administrative access through our sponsor's account. However, new users would not be familiar with her role in Aid to Artisans; therefore, it would be more efficient if a unique ATAU Admin account was created. Our sponsor would continue to stay as

administrator alongside the new Admin account. This would allow any future interns or administrators to share this account instead of using our sponsor's private account. Creating a new profile would entail creating an account with the username "Aid to ArtisansU," or "ATAU Admin." The goal for this new profile is to limit the amount of traffic going through a personal account, and complete all administrative and technical work through the one general profile.

Moreover, the new administrator should be posting updates and/or new resources monthly. Monthly updates will provide time for the administrator to gather new resources, but also continue to keep the audience interested in the website. However, during high traffic seasons, such as months prior to the Market Readiness Program and large trade shows, we suggest updating resources biweekly in order to bring attention to ATAU's important resources. If new resources are unavailable, the sample social media templates can be posted as reminders about ATAU.

5. We recommend a monthly meeting with the CreativeU Web Development Team and ATA to discuss the website's analytical data and any additional technical updates.

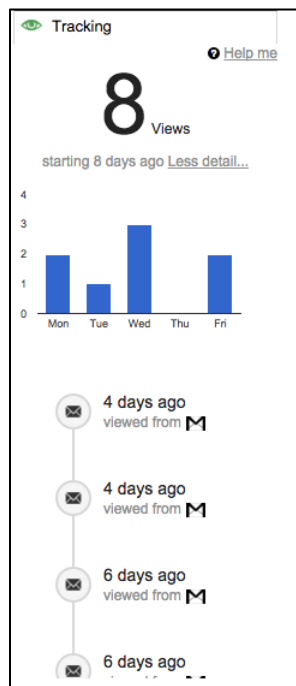
A monthly meeting with the web development team will ensure that any technical glitches will be taken care of, and that the website is well maintained. Monthly recommendations will also give time for the Shift E-Learning team to finish any updates that have been discussed. Moreover, we recommend that the ATAU web development team provide monthly qualitative data including a one page Google Analytics and Hub Analytics report, such as number of users, number of users taking courses, and overall number of page views.

Communicating with members

6. For smaller groups of emails, such as groups less than 15-20 people, we recommend sending personalized emails via Gmail with the Streak application.

After working with Constant Contact (Goodman, 2004), we noticed that all emails sent out through the emailing service were filtered into the “Promotions” tab of the recipient’s Gmail.

The Gmail “Promotions” tab is not a part of the user’s main Inbox; thus, the recipient does not



see the email at first glance, lowering the chance of the user to open the email. With Gmail, emails go directly to the main inbox of the recipient, and we could see who had opened our emails. The Streak attachment for Gmail has a tracking system that tells the user when the recipient has opened the email and from what device (Ismail & Mawani, 2012).

However, in order to personalize each email, emails must be sent out individually. Thus, we recommend using Gmail for email group sizes only between 1-20 people to reduce the amount of labor necessary to send emails out. For mass emailing for groups larger than 20 people, or

Streak Tracking.

sending updates to the entire ATA database, we recommend using

Constant Contact (Goodman, 2004) with a personalized greeting header. This will reduce the amount of time needed to send emails, especially quick reminder emails or general inquiry emails. Gmail should be used for emails that require more attention to the recipient.

Marketing and Networking

7. We recommend increasing advertising at trade shows and networking with other nonprofits with in-person presentations or videoconference calls.

Although we sent many emails and social media posts throughout our project, we found that more people became interested in/engaged with the website after we presented the online platform in person. Our presentations provided them with a visual of how the platform works and what resources were available. We were able to highlight certain features depending on the audience of the presentation, which proved successful in engaging them to use ATAU for those reasons. We saw a higher number of page views after in-person presentations and personalized attention rather than simple emails or social media posts.

Advertising at trade shows, such as our efforts at the EWI craft show, proved effective in getting the artisans interested in using the website. At the craft show, we were able to discuss with them what resources were available on the ATAU website that could help them continue to sell the specific products they had on display.

We gave general presentations to six different nonprofit organizations and social enterprises that are based around the world. From these presentations, we were able to initiate collaboration conversations between Aid to Artisans and the nonprofit organization. A few presentations resulted in creating articles about the nonprofit that was uploaded onto the ATAU website, while other presentations began discussion about sharing business training resources between organizations. Moreover, speaking with senior coordinators at organizations can help in ATA's network expansion. Thus, it is important to continue to highlight the benefits of ATAU for all members in the international artisan sector, even professionals.

8. We recommend continuing the development of Aid to ArtisansU Abroad. Specifically, we suggest that Aid to Artisans looks into proposing the idea to students at ATA presentations and events. This will provide an understanding of the interest level for this program.

Aid to ArtisansU Abroad will ensure that Aid to Artisans can continue its outreach to all levels of artisans and promote cultural education for students. The initial proposal for ATAU Abroad was developed. The next step for ATAU Abroad is to send out online surveys to universities and colleges in the area, as well as ATA contacts in the Peace Corps. Aid to Artisans can then evaluate the feasibility and amount of potential interest in this program. ATAU Abroad can also be presented to the student applicants of Creative Learning's other division, America's Unofficial Ambassadors (AUA). These include students who travel to the Middle East to help local communities. Thus, AUA would be a good group to consider during the creation of Aid to ArtisansU Abroad. We created a contact list of schools, universities, and organizations that have a study abroad program or have expressed interest in international opportunities on their website (see **Appendix O**). This list will be given to Aid to Artisans to use to find potential students.

Reflections

Over the course of seven weeks, we were able to experience the benefits and challenges that nonprofit organizations face every day. With limited resources and funding, nonprofits have to come up with creative and efficient strategies that will create the biggest impact in serving the target community. Similarly, we were tasked to adopt that mindset in order to effectively expand the ATAU platform with minimal resources. In the end, each member of our team gained valuable knowledge and skills from our time on this project.

Ife Bell's Reflection

Through this project, I learned the importance of personal interaction and the difficulty of global communication. When we went to the craft shows and talked to the artisans, they explained that the best way to gain the trust of customers is through personal interactions. With global communication, the difficulty lies in choosing the most effective means of communication for the target audience. For example, we did not receive as much information from our surveys as we did in our in-person meetings with artisans. I understood the impact of personal communication when working with the international community, and have developed good presentation skills to be able to make that connection with other people.

Anjali Kuchibhatla's Reflection

Working with Aid to Artisans has been a very unique experience; from this project, I learned about the collaborative atmosphere of the nonprofit sector. A nonprofit organization only has so many resources and time to be able to try to solve a global issue. Thus, it becomes

important to work with everyone and form partnerships to create impactful initiatives. I learned about how collaboration can positively impact the growth of an idea or program. Without Creative Learning staff, which helped us learn how to communicate and work with the international artisans, the development of Aid to ArtisansU would have been extremely challenging.

Melissa Rivera's Reflection

Working for Aid to Artisans helped me develop essential communication, business, project management and networking skills. In addition to this, it was meaningful to work on a domestic project that has a great international impact. The artisans and buyers expressed their gratitude for our work on this project, which was extremely gratifying. The impact of our work also affected me personally; in my home country of Guatemala, I have witnessed the positive impact that free access to educational resources has on impoverished communities. I am humbled that our assistance in developing Aid to ArtisansU will help rural artisans overcome poverty.

Ethical considerations

All completed work was at Aid to Artisans' discretion and approval. Prior to conducting any interviews, interviewees were asked for consent and approval of use of content in our proposal. All case studies or archival research that was completed, along with any quotations, was properly cited and referenced if used in the proposal.

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Appendices

Appendix A: ATAU Web Development Team Questions

1. What was the primary target audience you were designing the ATAU website for, and what did you do to determine the needs of your target audience?
2. What techniques do you think would boost donations and funds for your e-platform, and attract more contributors to ATAU?
3. While you were still conceptualizing the website, what features (both significant and minor) did you have in mind, and which ones did you omit from the current ATAU website format?
4. What do you think of the current ATAU online format/features, and how do you envision the website in three years?
5. What parts of the website do you think need a lot of updating and tweaking to match your target audience's and ATA's expectations, and attract more visitors?
6. What factors would you take into account when promoting ATAU to the masses? Which advertising approaches would work best for something like ATAU (e.g. PPC, ads...)?
7. What are some of the components of ATAU's platform that you especially want to emphasize when promoting the website?
8. What are some ways to convince those nonprofits, as well as other organizations and foundations, to sponsor/support ATAU and foster its growth and development?
9. What were some of the demographic (gender, education, income, resources...) implications that you encountered while designing ATAU, if any?

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview (D.C. Communities)

1. How long have you been working in the artisan/handicraft industry?
2. What words would you associate with the word “Artisan?” *
3. Are you aware of the nonprofit organization Aid to Artisans?* If so, how did you hear about the organization?
4. Were you aware of Aid to Artisans’ new website, Aid to ArtisansU?*
5. If the answer to the previous question is yes, how did you find out about the website?
6. How do you normally seek out information or hear about different organizations?*

 - a. Finding print media (flyers, brochures, pamphlets)
 - b. Typing phrases into search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing)
 - c. Through posts on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
 - d. Other:

7. What are some ways you market your own business (print, online/social media, etc.)?
8. Would you be interested in free online business courses in order to expand your own business?

Aid to ArtisansU is a newly launched website that offers free online business courses to global artisans that teach them how to expand their businesses to the United States.

- 9) If you were a member, what would be the easiest way for you to get the same information currently on Aid to ArtisansU?
 - a) More pamphlets, flyers, or posters in the areas
 - b) More posts on social media
 - c) Easier access to business courses (through Youtube, online website, etc.)
 - d) Conferences/Personal interaction (having seminars or speakers conduct panels)

e) Other:

Appendix C: Online Survey (ATAU Audience)

- 1) What is your primary language?*
- 2) What words would you associate with the word “Artisan?”* *Please list at least five words.*
- 3) What skills would you consider important as a small business owner? * *Please list at least five words.*
- 4) How long have you been working in the artisan/handicraft industry? *
- 5) Are you a member of ATA and/or user of ATAU?
 - a) Yes, I am a member and a user of ATAU. (Go to question 9, then to question 10).
 - b) Yes, I am a member of ATA but not a user of ATAU. (Go to question 8, then to question 10).
 - c) No, I am not a member or a user. (Go to question 6, then to question 10).
- 6) Are you aware of the nonprofit organization Aid to Artisans? *
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 7) How did you hear about the organization?
- 8) Do you know about Aid to Artisans’ new website, Aid to ArtisansU? *
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 9) If yes, how did you find out about the website?

Aid to ArtisansU is a newly launched website that offers free online business courses to global artisans that teach them how to expand their businesses to the United States.
- 10) If you were a member of ATAU, what would be the easiest way for you to get updates?
 - a) More pamphlets, flyers, or posters in the areas

- b) More posts on Facebook or Twitter
- c) Conferences/Personal interaction (having seminars or speakers conduct panels)
- d) Other:

11) How would you rank the importance of an organization's website characteristics? (1 being the most important, 5 being the least important)*

12) What type of course topics would be helpful for you as an artisan/small business owner? *

13) Would online badges or certificates motivate you to continue using the website?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Communication and Technology

14) Which is the easiest way to hear new information about an organization? *

- a) Print (flyers, brochures, pamphlets)
- b) Searching through Google, Yahoo, or Bing
- c) Through Facebook or Twitter
- d) Other

15) What kind of technical resources are available to you? * *Check all that apply.*

- a) Cell Phone
- b) Desktop Computer
- c) Laptop Computer
- d) Tablet
- e) None of the above
- f) Other

16) Which technical resource do you use the most for accessing the Internet? * *Please select one.*

- a) Cell Phone

- b) Desktop Computer
- c) Laptop Computer
- d) Tablet
- e) None of the above
- f) Other

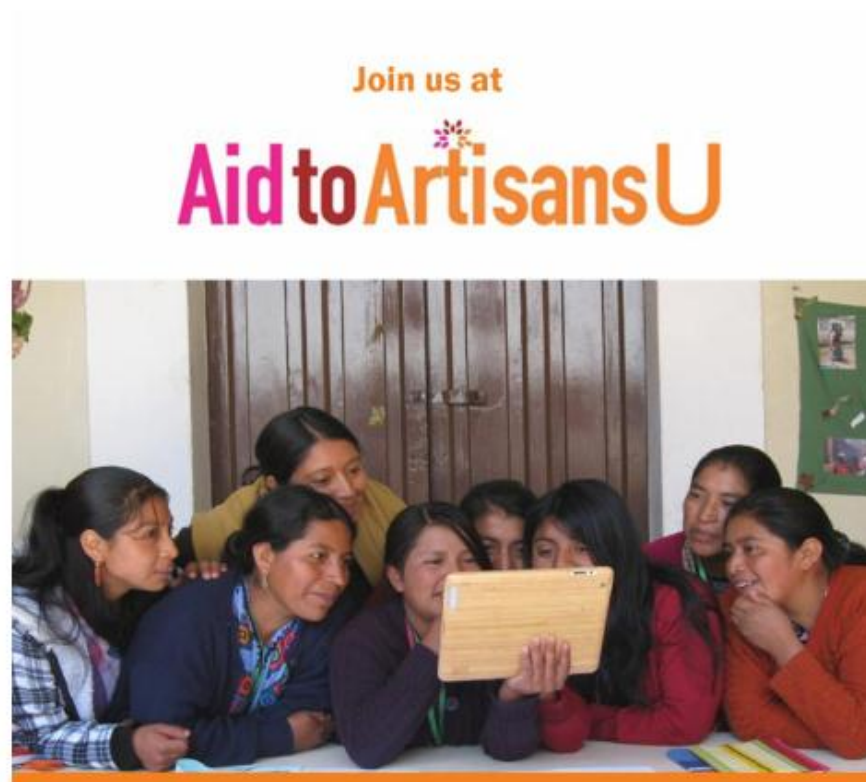
17) Which social media do you use the most? *

- a) Facebook
- b) Twitter
- c) Instagram
- d) None of the above
- e) Other

18) Do you have an email address or contact information that you would like to share? *This is for updates about the ATAU website.*

Appendix D: Email Templates

General Email Template




Greetings!

Thank you for interest in Aid to Artisans and its new website! Aid to Artisans (ATA), a division of Creative Learning, strives to assist in the business development of international, low-income artisans and to help them expand their enterprises into the global market. ATA's new e-platform, Aid to ArtisansU (ATAU), is an e-learning website and social networking platform that offers free online business courses for members, and the opportunity to connect with other groups in the artisan sector.

As a member of Aid to ArtisansU, you can:

 **Learn:** Take courses to improve business practices and communications. The **featured module** is an introduction to Aid to Artisans' signature **Market Readiness Program**, a preparation guide for successful entry into the U.S. retail market.

 **Connect:** Join discussions with other artisans, designers, and buyers, and directly message other members to expand your network.



Share: Explore resources and articles, comment, and share those resources with your friends and colleagues.

We highly encourage you to sign up for a free account, and perhaps even begin a discussion forum to help our international artisans, buyers, and retailers!

Regards,

The ATAU Team

Powered by  **CreativeU**
Using Learning for People in Development



Aid to Artisans (ATA) is a division of Creative Learning 501(c)(3), a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC.

We create economic opportunities for artisan groups around the world where livelihoods, communities, and craft traditions are marginal or at risk.

Stay In Touch



MRP Email Template

Join us at

Aid to ArtisansU




Greetings!

Thank you for participating in Aid to Artisans (ATA) Market Readiness Program! As a new initiative to expand learning and to connect with other artisans, designers, and buyers, ATA has added the new e-platform, Aid to ArtisansU (ATAU). ATAU offers free, short, and high-quality online courses relevant to artisan based enterprises, and the opportunity to connect and share.

We understand you are continually looking for ways and different connections to learn more about the market. You can do this through the following ways:

 **Learn:** Take courses to improve business practices and communications. The featured module is an introduction to Aid to Artisans' signature **Market Readiness Program**, a preparation guide for successful entry into the U.S. retail market.

 **Connect:** Join discussions with other artisans, designers, and buyers, and directly message other members to expand your network.



Share: Explore resources and articles, comment, and share those resources with your friends and colleagues.



Earn Badges: Complete a series of courses and receive a badge on your profile to show off your skill.

You can search for courses, articles, and resources by specialized categories!

Please note that as a Market Readiness Participant, you already have free account with Aid to ArtisansU!

You can log in [here](#) by using the email address you provided at the MRP, and the following password: 123456789

We highly encourage you to sign up for a free account, and perhaps even begin a discussion forum to help our international artisans, buyers, and retailers!

Regards,

The ATAU Team



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Stay In Touch



Artisan Email Template


Join us at
Aid to ArtisansU




Greetings!

Are you looking for way to enter the U.S. retail market? We are pleased to introduce you to Aid to ArtisansU (ATAU), is an e-learning platform that offers free business online resources and a way to connect with other artisans, buyers, and retailers. We know as an artisan you are continually looking for ways to grow your business. You can through our three interactive sections:

 **Learn:** Take courses to improve business practices and communications. The featured module is an introduction to Aid to Artisans' signature **Market Readiness Program**, a preparation guide for successful entry into the U.S. retail market.

 **Connect:** Join discussions with other artisans, designers, and buyers, and directly message other members to expand your network.

 **Share:** Explore resources and articles, comment, and share those resources with your friends and colleagues.



Earn Badges: Complete a series of courses and receive a badge on your profile to show off your skill.

You can search for courses, articles, and resources by specialized categories!

We highly encourage you to **sign up for a free account**, and perhaps even begin a discussion forum to help our international artisans, buyers, and retailers!

Regards,

The ATAU Team



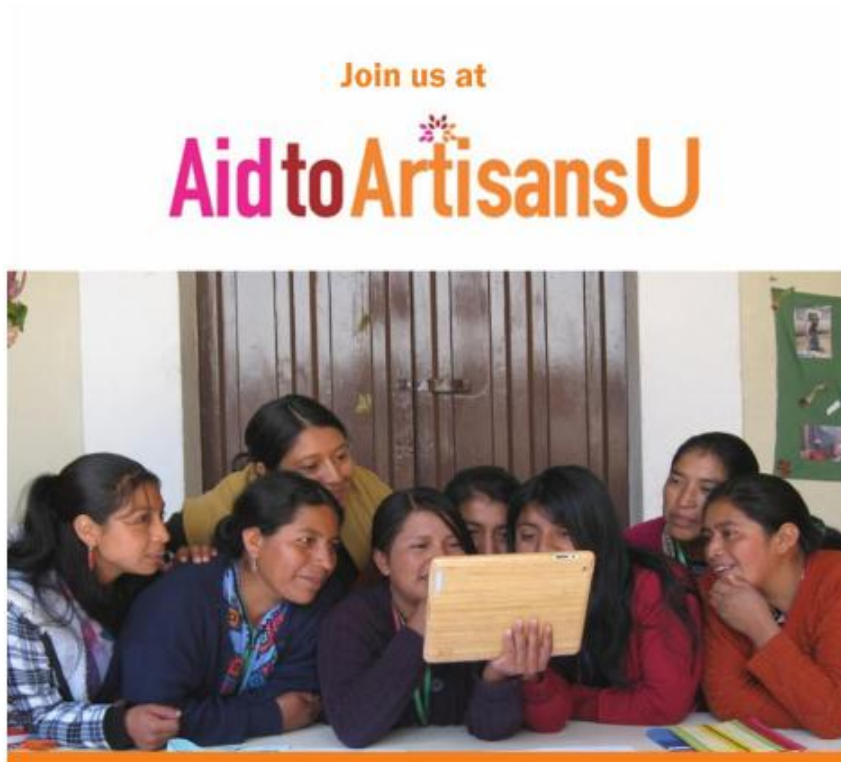
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We create economic opportunities for artisan groups around the world where livelihoods, communities, and craft traditions are marginal or at risk.

Stay In Touch



Buyer/Retailer/Designer Email Template



Greetings!

Are you looking for a simple way to connect with international artisans online, and contact them about their products? Aid to Artisans (ATA), a division of Creative Learning, strives to assist in the business development of international, low-income artisans and to help them expand their enterprises into the global market. Aid to Artisans' new e-platform, Aid to ArtisansU (ATAU), is an e-learning website and social networking platform that offers free online business courses for members, and the opportunity to connect with other members in the artisan sector.

As a buyer/retailer/designer, you will be able to easily create personal interactions with artisans from all around the world, and find handmade products made with quality and care.

By signing up for a free account on Aid to ArtisansU, you can choose to:

 **Learn:** Take courses to improve business practices and communications. The featured module is an introduction to Aid to Artisans' signature **Market Readiness Program**, a preparation guide for successful entry into the U.S. retail market.



Connect: Join discussions with other artisans, designers, and buyers, and directly message other members to expand your network.



Share: Explore resources and articles, comment, and share those resources with your friends and colleagues.

We highly encourage you to **sign up for a free account**, and perhaps even begin a discussion forum to help our international artisans, buyers, and retailers!

Regards,

The ATAU Team

Powered by  **CreativeU**
Leading Learning for People in Development



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We create economic opportunities for artisan groups around the world where livelihoods, communities, and craft traditions are marginal or at risk.

Stay In Touch



Appendix E: Aid to ArtisansU Flyer

Join us at

Aid to ArtisansU



Learn, Connect, and Share with artisans, buyers, designers, and more!

Join us:
aidtoartisans.creativeu.com
Contact us:
info@creativelearning.com



Appendix F: Interview Notes with Nureen Das

We conducted a semi-structured interview, using questions from Appendix B. She provided verbal consent to our use of her responses in our report.

- **Nureen Das**
 - 2015 MRP Participant, professional
 - Community development, specializing in income development and works with income generation projects
 - Started in microfinance, majored in History and Economics and received a Masters in International Development
 - Joined the Peace Corps, worked with women's groups in capacity building for two years
 - Full-time job: Executive Search Recruiting for nonprofits
- **Founder of the Artesan Gateway**
 - Goal: to become an online platform for networking and resources
 - To connect artisans to buyers, designers, and retailers
- **Is a blog a good first step?**
 - For her, yes: because it is manageable
- **How do you look at hits and views for your blog?**
 - Website stats through WordPress (free website creator)
 - The highest viewed post was about Higher Ground and production development
 - Gained traction through the larger group of Higher Ground because it spread through their network
- **How do you keep your audience engaged? How do you decide what to blog?**
 - She has a calendar in which she schedules three posts every week, and plans posts a week at a time
 - In order to keep the audience engaged, it's important to remain in touch and be proactive
 - Being clear about the purpose of the blog helps guide what topics are going to be covered
- **What are some ways you market your own business?**
 - Online presence through social media
 - Making connection through bigger networks
 - Be visible and use ATA's pre-established connections
- **Do your members have the chance to post articles?**
 - Currently, no: this is to avoid any spam
 - Two types of engaged communities: quick commenters and those who want a full forum/conversation
 - Have to find topics to actually discuss in the forum
- **Where do you see Artesan Gateway in five years?**
 - Engaging buyers, small business owners, and artisans
 - Focus on livelihood and skill training
 - Focus on the tension between socio-economic stress and retail
- **How did you hear about ATA?**

- Connections through company, and Mary at Empowered Women International
- **What words do you associate with the word “Artisan?”**
 - “Skill, craft, and handmade”
- **There is a different between artisan producer, artisan, and artisan leader**
 - Artisan: traditional skilled
 - Artisan producer: trained to certain products
 - Artisan leader: more sophisticated and tech savvy artisan that is connected between the market and the rural artisans
- **What marketing strategies do you recommend for ATAU?**
 - A combination of different platforms and resources to connect with different groups
 - One advantage of ATAU is that already has an established network through ATA. ATAU can use that to its advantage and engage these members in order to increase interest
- **What do you think would be a good incentive for buyers to engage with ATAU?**
 - Providing them recommendations of artisans that are highly engaged with ATAU. That way, buyers know that the artisan leaders on ATAU are business savvy and have been “vetted” in how to work in the U.S market sector
- **Do you think it would be possible to feature an article of ATAU in your website?**
 - Yes, that would be great!

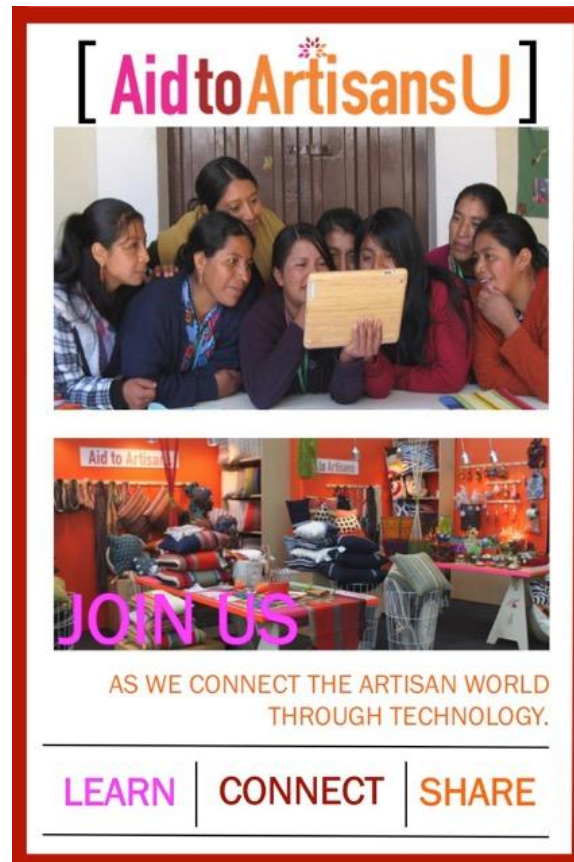
Appendix G: Interview with Paola Martinez

We conducted a semi-structured interview, using questions from Appendix B. She provided verbal consent to our use of her responses in our report.

- **Paola Martinez**
 - Student studying textile design and social work
 - Became involved in working with Aid to Artisans Mexico through her university
 - Project called “Los Altos de Chiapas” in Chiapas for two months (June-July 2015) on a project that was focused on the modernization of textiles
 - Made textile designs
 - Worked on ways of optimizing the threading and handicraft making process
 - Completed field work with the artisans (worked with the communities and observed how the artisans made the handicrafts)
 - Project in Puebla, Mexico
 - Worked on seven different techniques of making handicrafts and design
 - She is working on creating and continuing artisan workshops in use of textiles, adobe, and “palma”
 - Assists artisans with their design collections and preparing their materials for the NY Now show (craft event)
- **How has ATA helped you meet your academic and personal goals as a student?**
 - “Doing fieldwork in Chiapas and in Puebla, Mexico has been a totally new experience for me. The work with the artisans opens up doors to your culture, you learn new things. You face a real part of life and take your knowledge into practice.”
 - She has been involved with the artisans, and has led her to understand that she enjoys working in this sector and wants to work a lot more with artisans
 - Hopes that this will provide opportunities and better standards of living for the artisans
- **What kind of impact has ATA and your project had on the community?**
 - Study done in the Mexican communities
 - Evaluated how ATA had changed their lives after working with the artisans over 3 years
 - Their standards of living, conditions, etc. have gotten a lot better
 - Director Maria Eugenia Rivera completed the study done in these communities that worked with ATA. Paola requested these studies and will forward them to us.
- **What makes ATA unique? In our opinion, what makes it different from other NGOs?**
 - ATA provides the tools for artisans so that they can work on their handicrafts
 - Does not only provide money, but also assists in personal development through leadership training, and offering management and other business skills
 - They learn how to value their products and handmade abilities

- Provides access to markets at a national and international level
- **Have you personally been able to see how ATA has changed artisan lives?**
 - She is still in the process of explaining to people how ATA works and what benefits they can receive from it
 - “You can see their excitement and how grateful they are, and you can see that they want to put a lot more effort into their work”
 - “The artisans become more open to the suggestions that you give to them”
 - As a person you become more humanitarian and professionally it gives you the opportunity to meet a lot of different people from different cultures
- **How can artisans get more help?**
 - Artisan products need a lot of “diffusion”
 - They need to reach a larger audience that is able to “appreciate the value of handmade”
 - Believes it is a good idea to publicize and spread the word
 - “to give value to the products for what they really are”
- **Where do you see ATA in the future?**
 - Expanding their reach into a lot of different places and countries
- **What could be an incentive for students to join an idea like ATAU Abroad?**
 - There are a lot of people interested in the cause, but not a lot of people know about the organization itself
 - Believes that there is a lack of public information regarding ATA and its goals
 - Creating a requirement or credit opportunity for students
 - The experience helps students in the future to get a job
 - Look for similar organizations, collaborate with them, and have them help spread the word about ATA
- **Do you think that a student that is not involved in the area of art and artisanal work could still get involved with ATA?**
 - Any person that is interested can get involved, in fact, a lot of different people are involved with ATA
 - The administrative part is very important for projects
- **Any questions for us?**
 - “The platform you have described has incredible potential. Please let me know if I can help you!”

Appendix H: Social Media Templates



[Aid to Artisans U]

JOIN US

AS WE CONNECT THE ARTISAN WORLD THROUGH TECHNOLOGY.

LEARN | CONNECT | SHARE



✓ **SHARE**
Aid to Artisans U

Share your ideas and resources online.
Be part of our team!
aidtoartisans.creativeu.com



"I decided to not give up. I will work hard to find grants and other ways to support the project as well as network to help develop our products" -Selenge Tserendash

aidtoartisans.creativeu.com

Aid to Artisans U

**Do you want learn
how to publicize
your product?**

Aid to Artisans U

aidtoartisans.creativeu.com





Aid to Artisans U

Take free courses online and
get prepared for our Market
Readiness Program
aidtoartisans.creativeu.com

Appendix I: Interview Questions (Rural Artisans)

1. What words would you associate with the word "Artisan"?
2. What skills would you consider important as a small business owner?
3. How long have you been working in the artisan/handicraft industry?
4. Do you know about Aid to Artisans' new website, Aid to Artisans University?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. Are you a user of Aid to Artisans University (ATAU)?
 - a. Yes, I am a user of ATAU.
 - b. No, I am not a user.

Aid to ArtisansU (ATAU) is a newly launched website that offers free online business courses to global artisans that teach them how to expand their business to the United States. ATAU also helps artisans connect with other artisans, designers, and buyers.

6. Which is the easiest way for you to learn about an organization?
 - a. Print (Flyers, brochures, newsletters)
 - b. Searching through Google, Yahoo, or Bing
 - c. Through Facebook or Twitter
7. On a scale of 1-5, how well do you know how to use a computer and the Internet?
 - a. 1- I do not know how to use a computer.
 - b. 2- I know very little about using computers.
 - c. 3- I know how to do basic things on the Internet (like using Google)
 - d. 4- I know how to look at different websites and can click through websites.
 - e. 5- I know a lot about using the Internet and computers.

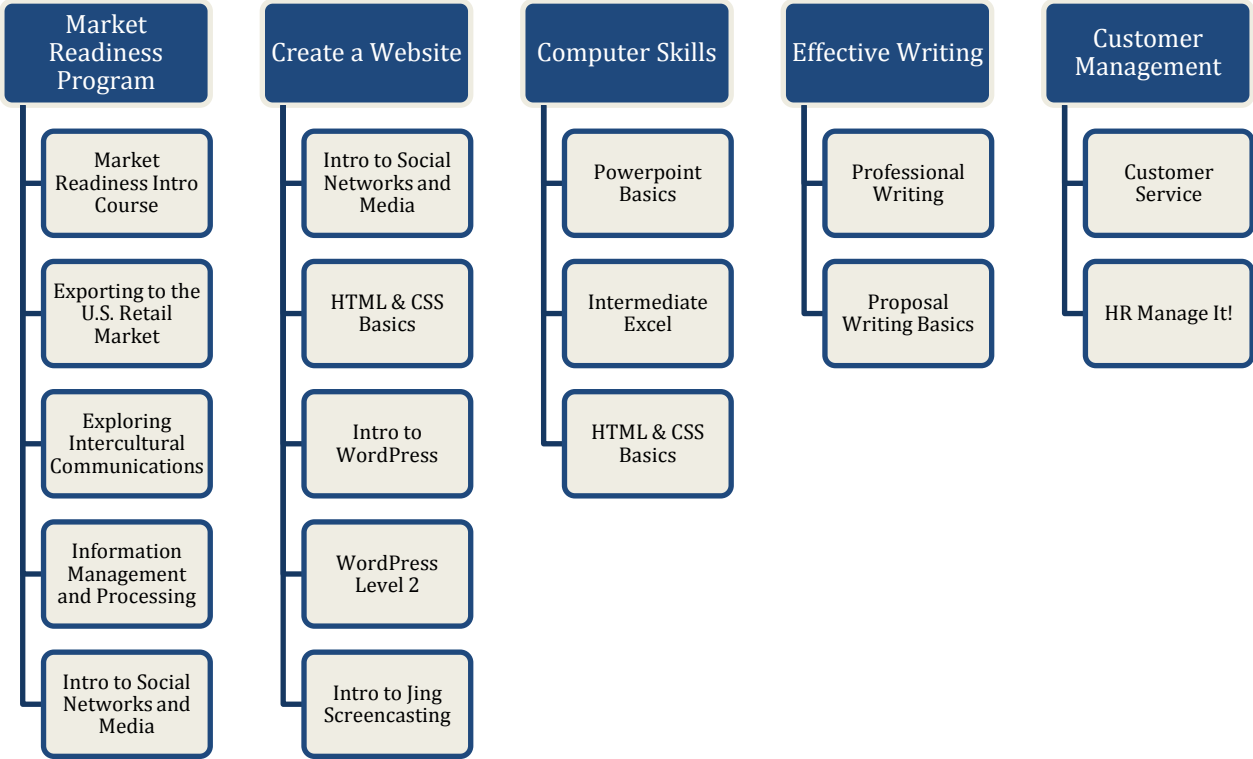
8. What kinds of technical resources are available to you?
- a. Cell Phone
 - b. Desktop Computer
 - c. Laptop Computer
 - d. Tablet
 - e. None of the above
9. Which technical resources do you use the most for accessing the Internet?
- a. Cell phone
 - b. Desktop Computer
 - c. Laptop Computer
 - d. Tablet
 - e. None of the above
10. Would you use ATAU if someone were to help you learn how to use it?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other

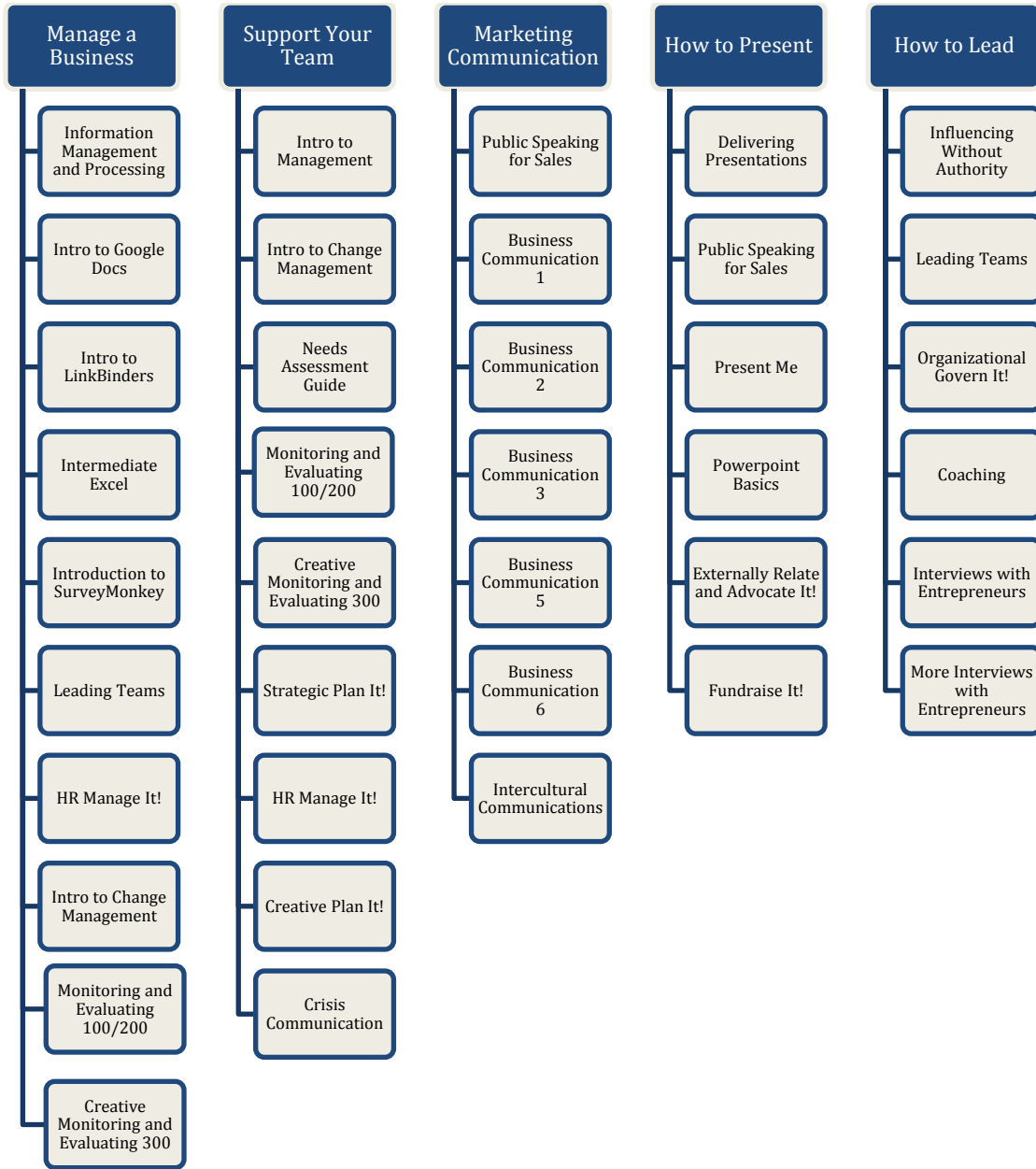
Appendix J: General Article for ATA U

Recently launched in August 2015, [Aid to ArtisansU](#) is an e-learning website and social networking platform for those associated with the international craft sector. This platform offers free, short, and high-quality online courses relevant to artisan based enterprises, and the opportunity to connect and share through the three interactive sections: Learn, Connect, and Share. In “Learn”, you can take courses to improve your business practices and communication skills. The featured module is an introduction to Aid to Artisans’ signature [Market Readiness Program™](#), a preparation guide for successful entry into the U.S. retail market. In “Connect,” you can join discussions with other artisans, designers, and buyers. You can also directly message other members to expand your network. In “Share,” you can explore resources and articles, comment, and share those resources with your friends and colleagues.

Anyone who is involved with the international craft sector is welcome to join! We welcome those who work with and represent artisans. Being a member gives you direct access to a wide network of artisans, buyers, and designers. By signing up for a free account, you can learn more about important skills necessary for expansion and development of your enterprise!

Appendix K: ATAU Courses Re-categorization





Appendix L: Interview Notes with Joy Bittner

We conducted a semi-structured interview, using questions from Appendix B. She provided verbal consent to our use of her responses in our report.

- **Joy Bittner**
 - Works as Director of Ecuador Operations for Faire Collections
 - Works in Ecuador, directly with Artisans and the U.S. buyers
 - Has hands-on experience leading development projects in rural communities throughout Latin America
 - MA in Social Work from Fordham University, NY
 - Specialization in nonprofit management from Universidad San Andreas in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- **Faire Collections**
 - Founded in 2013: design products that are sourced from artisan partners in Vietnam, Swaziland, Peru, and Ecuador
 - Collaborates with more than 225 artisans
 - Inspires positive change through social programs, educational scholarships, and no interest loans
 - Also provides customized business training to foster productive social development
 - Training program in Ecuador includes: Financial Management, Accounting, Computer Literacy, Management, etc.
- Started with an overview of what ATA is and does
 - Canvas Home Small Grants, MRP, ATA
 - ATAU Presentation
 - Questioned about course type and duration? Suggested that should be more apparent when looking at courses
- Questions
 - **Have you had the chance to look at the platform, and if so what were your first impressions?**
 - Suggested to have more description on the courses
 - Asked about multiple languages that were mentioned in the opening video
 - From the buyer prospective, courses not necessary to pick a group
 - “Coach surfing”- comments on how the other buyers worked with that artisan
 - Tagging products, geographical search
 - As an artisan, prefer less text-heavy things, more visual, possibly taped lectures
 - **What are some resource/technology limitations you have observed when working with artisans? What has worked best for Faire Collection in terms of conducting training sessions?**
 - Keeping it low-tech
 - Faire uses in-person presentations.

- Artisans she has worked with in Ecuador like having certificates. It is a cultural thing to collect and show off certificates
- try to avoid jargon
- **What type of course topics would be helpful for you as an artisan/small business owner?**
 - how to price your product accurately
 - loan with interest
 - packing and tagging
 - product presentation and photography
- **Do you currently connections in the U.S. Retail Market or does Faire work primarily in other countries?**
 - All sales are done in the U.S. Retail Market

Quick Note:

- Artisans need help understanding aesthetics in the U.S. Retail Market.
- Have design students for ATAU abroad?

Appendix M: ATAU Badges with Description



Introduction to Market Readiness

Through the “Market Readiness Introductory Course,” gather the tools you need to be prepared for Aid to Artisans signature program, the Market Readiness Program™! This badge is designed to give you tips about how to find your niche in the U.S. retail market.



Manage Your Business

With the “Manage Your Business” series, learn important organizational skills that will help you stay on track as a manager. Get an introduction in different online tools like Excel, Survey Monkey, and GoogleDocs that will help you keep all information organized.



Marketing Communication

Learn tips on how to promote your product and your business to others in the artisan sector. Follow along with the Business Communication series to understand how to connect with other businesses, and develop skills to present your business and product to others.



How to Lead

Take the “Interview with Entrepreneurs” module and “More Interviews with Entrepreneurs” module to gain valuable industry knowledge about what it is to be a small business owner. Learn how to lead teams and be an influential member in your group.



How to Present

Presentation skills are very important when trying to create a personal communication and connection within the industry. With the “How to Present” series, learn key techniques and present yourself well to your target audience.



Create a Website

Want to make a website for your enterprise? With this badge, learn about Word Press and other resources to help you create an online platform for your business and utilize social media to continue to promote your products.



Support Your Team

In order to be an influential and effective leader, you should have to the tools necessary to support your workers and staff. With courses such as “Introduction to Management,” “Strategic Plan It!,” and “Crisis Communication,” learn about the different ways you can understand the needs of your team and offer help with creative management strategies.



Computer Skills

Take introductory courses on Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, HTML and CSS to learn resourceful computer tools. These tools are designed to help you organize your information, present your business, and create a website.

Appendix N: List of Sponsors

<u>Name of Foundation or Organization</u>	<u>Types of Projects Donor Funds to</u>	<u>Region</u>
<u>Aga Khan Foundation</u>	health, education, rural development and strengthening of civil society	National and International
<u>American Express Foundation</u>	arts and culture, economic development, leadership development, education	National and International
<u>Annenberg Foundation</u>	animal welfare, arts and culture, education, environment, public health	Africa, Asia, California, Europe
<u>Arthur B. Schultz Foundation</u>	women's empowerment	Cambodia, Guatemala, Honduras, Jordan, Kenya, National, International, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Tanzania, Vietnam
<u>Case Foundation</u>	community and economic development, education, health, technology, youth organizing	National and International
<u>Coca-Cola Foundation</u>	education, women empowerment	Africa, Australia, California, Chile, China, Colombia, District of Columbia, Europe, Georgia, Italy, Japan, Latin America, New York, Philippines, Russia, Texas, Virginia
<u>Community Foundation for the National Capital Region</u>	workforce development, scholarships, neighbors in need	District of Columbia, Virginia, Maryland
<u>Deluxe Corporation Foundation*</u>	economic empowerment, arts and culture	Minnesota
<u>Dr. Scholl Foundation</u>	education, social service, healthcare, civic and cultural environmental	National and International
<u>IBM International Foundation</u>	general support grants	Africa, Asia, California, Canada, Europe, Latin America, National, International, New York
<u>John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation</u>	international programs, community and economic development, education	National and International
<u>John F. and Mary A. Geisse Foundation</u>	economic development in the developing world, rural development, and water development	Developing countries, National, International
<u>Kresge Foundation</u>	human services, arts and culture, education	National and International
<u>MetLife Foundation</u>	Access to Insights, Access to Knowledge	Brazil, California, District of Columbia, Illinois, India, Latin America, Massachusetts, Mexico, national, International, New York, Pennsylvania, Peru, South Korea
<u>State Street Foundation, Inc.</u>	education, employment and job development	Australia, Austria, Belgium, California, Canada, Cayman Islands, Europe, France, etc.
<u>Target Foundation</u>	arts and culture, community and economic development, family services, food aid, housing development, human services, museums, nonprofits	National (Minnesota)
<u>Tomberg Family Philanthropies</u>	poverty alleviation, the environment, health, education	National and International

Appendix O: List of Colleges & Universities for ATAU Abroad

School Name	Website
Art Center College of Design	www.artcenter.edu
Auburn University School of Industrial and Graphic Design	cadc.auburn.edu/graphicdesign
California College of the Arts (CCA)	www.cca.edu/academics/graphic-design
Carnegie Mellon School of Design	design.cmu.edu
College for Creative Studies	collegeforcreativestudies.edu
Fashion Institute of Technology	www.fitnyc.edu/2306.asp
Kansas City Art Institute (KCAI)	www.kcai.edu
Kennesaw State University School of Art and Design	arts.kennesaw.edu/visual_arts/welcome.php
Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)	www.mica.edu
Minneapolis College of Art and Design	mcad.edu/about-us
Northwestern University School of Professional Studies	sps.northwestern.edu/info/information-design.php
OTIS College of Art and Design	www.otis.edu
Parsons the New School For Design	www.newschool.edu/parsons
Pratt Institute	www.pratt.edu
Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)	www.risd.edu
RIT College of Imaging Arts and Sciences	cias.rit.edu/schools/design
Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)	www.scad.edu
School of Visual Arts (SVA)	www.sva.edu

The College of Saint Rose Center for Art and Design	www.strose.edu/academics/schoolofartsandhumanities/
The College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP)	daap.uc.edu
Lehigh University	http://www1.lehigh.edu/home
Michigan State University	http://msu.edu/
Virginia Commonwealth University	http://www.global.vcu.edu/contact/
Arcadia University	http://studyabroad.arcadia.edu/find-a-program/
Beloit College	https://www.beloit.edu/oie/contacts/
Boston University	http://www.bu.edu/abroad/contact-us/
Butler University	http://www.ifsa-butler.org/contact-us.html
Carleton College	https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/ocs/
Centre College	https://www.centre.edu/about/study-abroad/
Colby College	http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/
Saint Benedict College	http://www.csbsju.edu/global/contact-us
Dartmouth College	http://global.dartmouth.edu/contact
Dickinson College	http://www.dickinson.edu/homepage/577/global_programs

Appendix P: List of ATAU Intern Responsibilities

ATAU aims to educate artisans about international artisanal trade through online training courses offered on an electronic resource platform. The courses address the benefits and practices of promoting artisanal goods in the American retail market. In addition, the e-platform provides a networking space for international artisans, retailers, and buyers. As a user, you can directly message each other, earn badges, and start discussions to learn more about the international artisan sector.

As an ATAU Intern, you will be required to update the ATAU resources, such as articles, courses, and discussion questions, work with the CreativeU web development team to find glitches and recommend new technical updates and features that will benefit the ATAU user. Moreover, you will have to be aware of any local craft shows and presentation opportunities for ATAU. At these events, you will have to present ATAU to artisans, and highlight ATAU's benefits for the user.

Marketing/Advertising:

- Attend local craft shows and other ATA events in order to present ATAU to the audience
- Reach out to other nonprofit organizations (new and ATA known) to give ATAU general presentations
- Respond to videoconference calls, phone calls, or general inquiries about ATAU
- Work with ATA's Social Media and Communication professional to create print and media marketing for ATAU (Flyers, pamphlets, social media posts, etc.)

Updates:

- Click through the ATAU website to search for any bugs or glitches within the system
- Reply to comments or discussion questions in any parts of the website
- Meet with the CreativeU Development team every month to discuss updates and recommendations
- After meetings, if any technical recommendations are made, follow up with emails with a prioritized list
- Find new resources relevant to those on the platform: this can involve research on different business development topics, or collaborating with other NGOs or social enterprises to spotlight new partners and write articles

Recommended Skills:

- Proficient in Microsoft Office
- Good presentation and problem-solving skills
- Some knowledge in marketing and business communication methods
- A general understanding of the e-learning area and its relation to the international artisan sector
- Demonstrates Creativity (in terms of solving problems and in graphic design)

Internship Requirements:

- Must be able to devote roughly 5-10 hours/week
- Most of internship can be completed remotely, with weekly check-in meetings on-site

- Should have some interest in: international development, nonprofit management, and/or project management