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WOMEN'S HANDICRAFT DEVELOPMENT AT THE TRADITIONAL SHEEP BREEDING REGIONS OF GEORGIA TUSHETI AND SAMTSKHE-JAVAKHETI

ქალთა ხელნური რეწვის განვითარება  
 საქართველოს მცხვარეობის ტრადიციულ რეგიონებში  
 თუშეთსა და სამცხე-ჯავახეთში





The project benefited approximately 200 women from the selected regions. The project made possible the acquisition of additional raw materials, tools and equipment and provided trainings for women in marketing, design modification, dying, felt, weaving, and knitting to create high quality marketable items. The purpose of the project was to develop the existing skills of women from Samtskhe -Javakheti and Tusheti, developing the production of traditional textile crafts typical for the each region, taking into account availability of skills, materials, resources unique to a particular region and market needs. Important to the project were the textile traditions of ethnic minorities with the restoration of lost traditional techniques and handicraft products. The project provided an opportunity for interaction between designers and artisans; selected the brand item for each group to make artisans' groups capable of continuing work and marketing independently. During entire year project leaders documented the skilled artisans, their work process and items they produce to be featured in a documentary film. The film will be used to promote and increase attention of artisans and folk art in Georgia. The resulting textile handicraft collection from the project was featured and marketed at the exhibitions:  
2006 National Geographic "All Roads" Folk Art Market, Washington D.C. USA  
2007 Traditional Textile Handicraft – project presentation, Parliamentary Library of Georgia, Tbilisi, GEO  
2007 Santa Fe Folk Art Market, Santa Fe, NM. USA



**Historically, Georgian women at all social levels, from peasants to noble women were skilled in handicraft.**

**Despite the difficult everyday life in the remote villages,**

**Handicraft items were highly respected in each Georgian household as well as the women who were skilled in craft making.**

**the heavy physical work and very low appreciation of the handicrafts by the local society,**

**The famous medieval Queen Tamar earned funds by selling her own golden thread embroidery. She used these funds for charity to help citizens in need.**

**women in Georgia are willing to express their creativity through crafts.**



Mission Statement:

The Georgian Textile Group (GTG) is an association of professional artists, designers, folk artists, researchers, art historians and ethnographers who work and support each other in the creation and promotion of fiber art. The group was formed in 1993 after the fall of the Soviet Union, to overcome the isolation of Georgian textile artists and to promote their work abroad. The group has expanded its activities to include working for the preservation of Georgia's cultural heritage, traditional crafts, contemporary textile art and design, textile education and cultural tourism. The GTG is a self-governed, nonprofit organization run by volunteers. An elected board coordinates all the activities of the group. Working on the development of the traditional textile crafts in Georgia is one of the main goals of the association. In 2003 the association opened the Textile Art Center. It provides opportunities for creative exchange and networking at the regional as well as at the international level; offers various textile art workshops and lectures held by invited lecturers and GTG members, helps folk artists from the various regions of Georgia initiate community groups to produce high quality textile handicrafts; holds various small scale exhibitions from the workshops all over the Georgia.

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