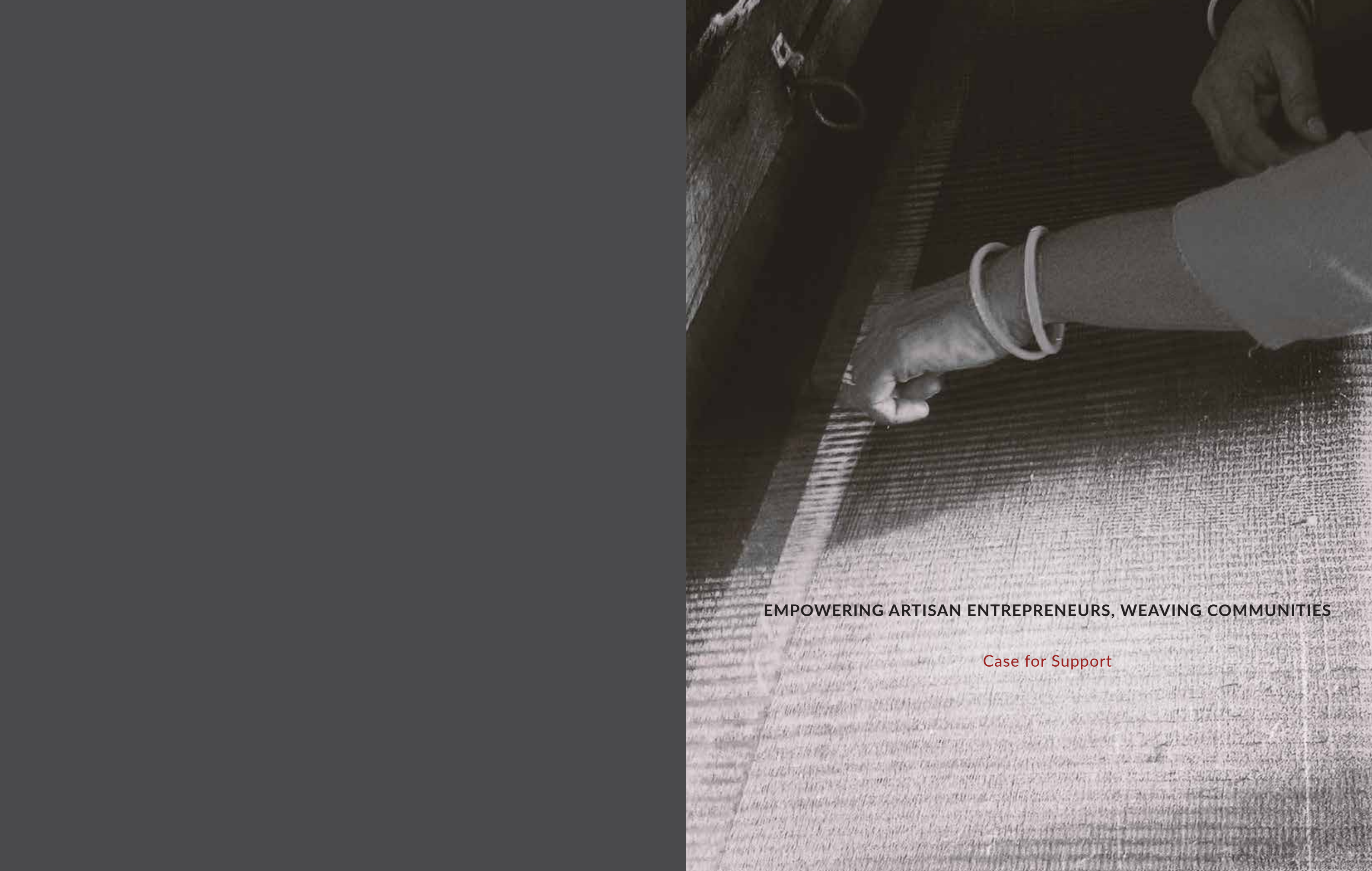
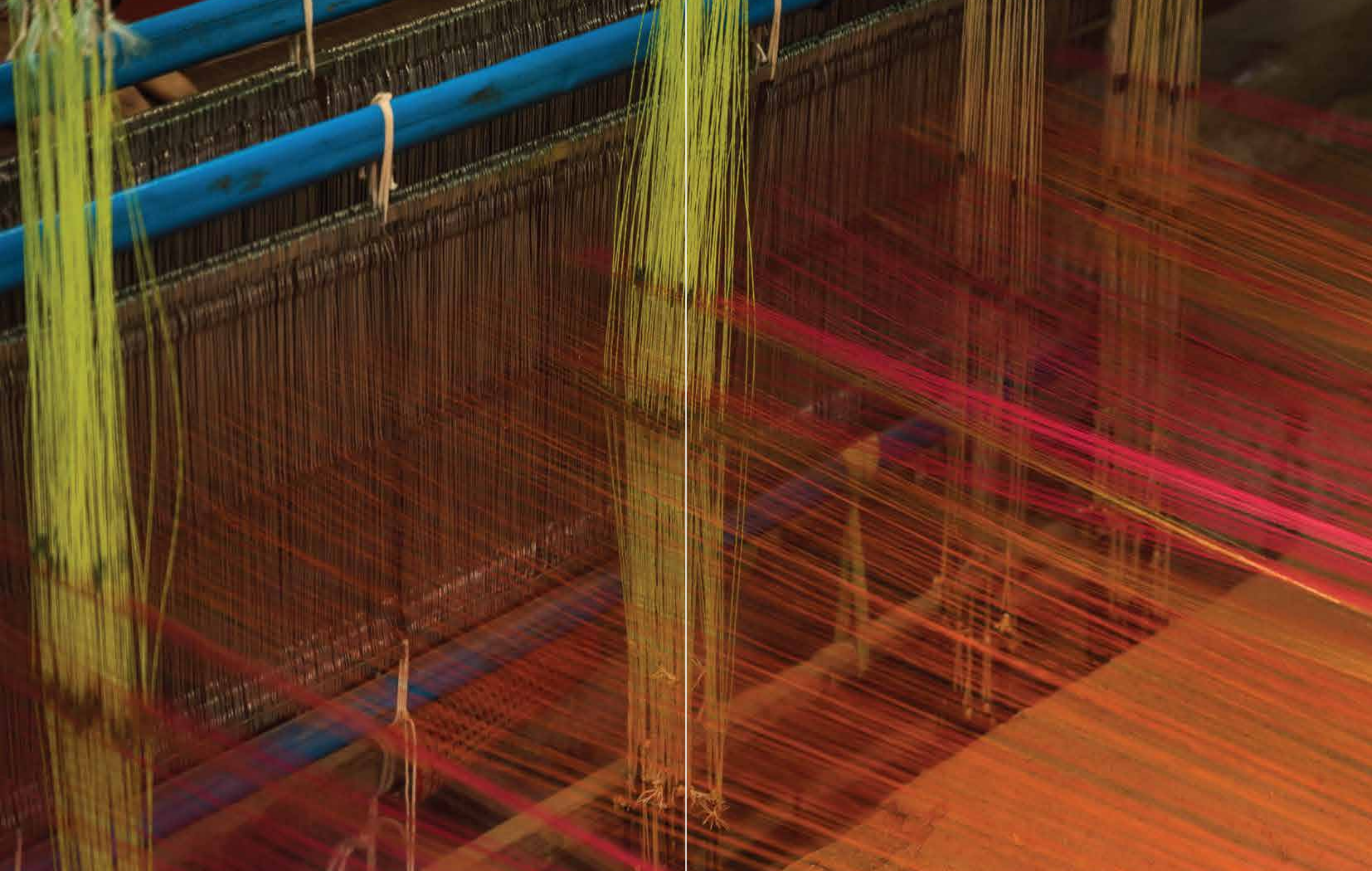


A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a person's hands weaving on a loom. The person is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and several white bangles on their right wrist. The loom is made of dark wood, and the weaving process is captured in a way that emphasizes the texture of the threads and the rhythmic motion of the hands. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

EMPOWERING ARTISAN ENTREPRENEURS, WEAVING COMMUNITIES

Case for Support





A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

THE STATUS OF HANDLOOM IN INDIA

THE MISSION & VISION OF THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL

PROGRAMS AT THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL

- Certificate in Design & Enterprise Management (CDEM)
- Certificate in Skilling the Unskilled (CSTU)
- Alumni Incubation Module (AIM)

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL

DONORS & SUPPORTERS OF THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL

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- Appendix A - Current Occupation of Graduates
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WORDS BY FACULTY

CONTACT INFORMATION



A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

The weaving tradition has a long-standing history in Maheshwar. As far back as 1700's, history credits Maharani Ahilya Bai Holkar with establishing, supporting and elevating the craft. In her honor, we carry forward this work today in an increasingly global and connected world. My journey began with REHWA Society in 1978 and continued with WomenWeave in 2003. During my years with REHWA Society and WomenWeave, it became evident that the rich and varied handloom traditions from the Indian subcontinent needed an opportunity to cross-pollinate in order to thrive.

The Handloom School (THS) was founded in 2013 to support young weavers across India who were beginning to doubt the validity and future of their craft in today's world. THS was created in order to provide young weavers from beyond Maheshwar with a place to meet, to learn, to collaborate with one another and to develop new skills, new designs and new markets. THS provides training in loom preparation activities, on-loom management, textile design and most importantly in business management and digital marketing. Over the past 10 years, we have empowered 177 weavers with these skills and the knowledge to create their own sustainable futures. This report highlights our achievements and identifies areas for further development.

Our team is dedicated to supporting steady and sustainable growth for the Indian handloom industry. Adding to the significant work done by REHWA and WomenWeave, THS is committed to increasing the awareness of handloom's significance to the global market and to building a strong, connected community of handloom weavers across the country.

On behalf of our entire handloom community, I thank you for your support and care.

Yours,

Sally Holkar

Founder, WomenWeave Charitable Trust



THE STATUS OF HANDLOOM IN INDIA

For hundreds of years, India’s handloom weavers have been renowned for their skills, knowledge and exquisite fabrics unmatched by weavers anywhere else on Earth. However, due to the convergence of structural problems, such as colonization, industrialization, and more recently, low-cost, mass produced fashion, the handloom sector is facing intense challenges. The declining demand for handloom, combined with widespread perceptions among rural communities that handloom is old fashioned work, and a lack of access by weavers to materials and contemporary designs, has meant that weavers are facing poverty and social instability.

The handloom sector ranks second after agriculture as a source of rural employment, yet, according to the Ministry of Textiles, in the last two decades, nearly 25% of young, trained weavers under 35 have left the profession.

For now, India is still the global leader in handloomed fabric production, but the sector could easily perish if its value to society, customers, and to weavers themselves cannot be established.

“ The click-clack of the looms is our reality. The day we do not hear these sounds, it is depressing. The rhythms set by the looms are our routine, the clock we live by. ”

- Shahnawaj

A wage-weaver and graduate of
The Handloom School, from Maheshwar.





THE MISSION & VISION OF THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL

Our Mission:

The Handloom School started with a mission to inspire young handloom artisans through a creative and practical multidisciplinary learning experience. The school is dedicated to providing students with the knowledge, skills, and values that enable them to equitably participate in the global marketplace. We are committed to developing the next generation of weaver entrepreneurs, as well as training unskilled women in the basics of handloom weaving.

Our Vision:

The Handloom School seeks to preserve Indian handloom as a sustainable art and a global industry. We envision handloom communities across India becoming economically viable and socially innovative and to seed a culture of quality, dignity and respect around weaving work. We aim to create diverse pathways to employment and to stimulate rural and semi-urban development through incubating the next generation of weaver entrepreneurs.

GOAL ALIGNMENT WITH THE SDGS :

Handloom weaving, as well as related artisanal activities, are the main livelihood for millions of Indians. By fostering craft-based communities, we can quickly create employment and better social inclusion as well as build sustainable social and economic systems to support future generations. The United Nations Sustainability Goals help explain our work.



ENDING POVERTY

Through initiatives like the Handloom School, young weavers nationwide are equipped with expertise in Design Technology and Entrepreneurial Management.



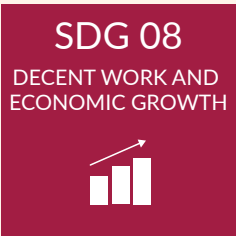
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION & ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

By 2030, the focus is on enhancing technical and vocational skills among youth and adults contributing significantly to employment and entrepreneurship.



GENDER EQUALITY

Through active involvement of both men and women, the handloom industry serves as a beacon of gender equality, enabling women weavers to assume leadership roles.



INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Additionally, its endeavors align with SDG 8, aiming to reduce unemployment among youth and foster inclusive economic growth, especially amongst marginalized communities and castes.

PROGRAMS AT THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL

The Handloom School runs three different programs to train and empower the next generation of India’s weavers.

CERTIFICATE IN DESIGN & ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT (CDEM)

The Handloom School’s entrepreneurship program for young handloom weavers culminates in a ‘Certificate in Design and Enterprise Management (CDEM)’ with specialization in handloom. The classroom segment of the course lasts 6 months and focuses on skill development in areas of design, communication, technology and business management, culminating in an end of term exhibition where potential clients meet and interact with graduates.



Skills Gained

- Advanced weaving techniques and design principles
- Business management tools such as basic accounting and product costing
- English-as-a-second language and presentation skills
- Use of information technology and digital marketing for business



CDEM GRADUATE SNAPSHOT

Nisha Verma is a weaver entrepreneur from Maheshwar. Before joining the 6th batch of the CDEM program in 2017, she was a daily wage weaver. She is now a micro-entrepreneur with a small atelier of 10 looms and looking to increase her business with designers.

Nisha is one of the very few women entrepreneurs of Maheshwar. Her work starts at 9 am every morning, when the doors of her workshop open.

“ I think I owe the most to the Business Management class at THS. Not to boast, but I am managing this all by myself. My husband leaves early in the morning for our fruit business. My elder son is not interested in weaving. My younger one is studying for his 12th boards and shows a lot of interest in weaving, but he is yet to join me in work.”

- Nisha Verma



IMPACT METRICS

- Since **2015** till **2022**, the CDEM has **152** graduates from **13** states and **21** weaving clusters across India
- **74%** of all CDEM graduates have remained in handloom weaving and prospered

ENTREPRENEURS:

- **40** graduates (30%) have gone on to start their own handloom enterprises, with their businesses generating gross annual sales of **₹33 lakh** on average
- On average a CDEM entrepreneur has also gone on to generate **10** new handloom weaving jobs, paying wages of **₹12.9 lakh** annually
- CDEM Entrepreneurs are themselves earning on average **₹5.8 lakh** per year from their enterprises

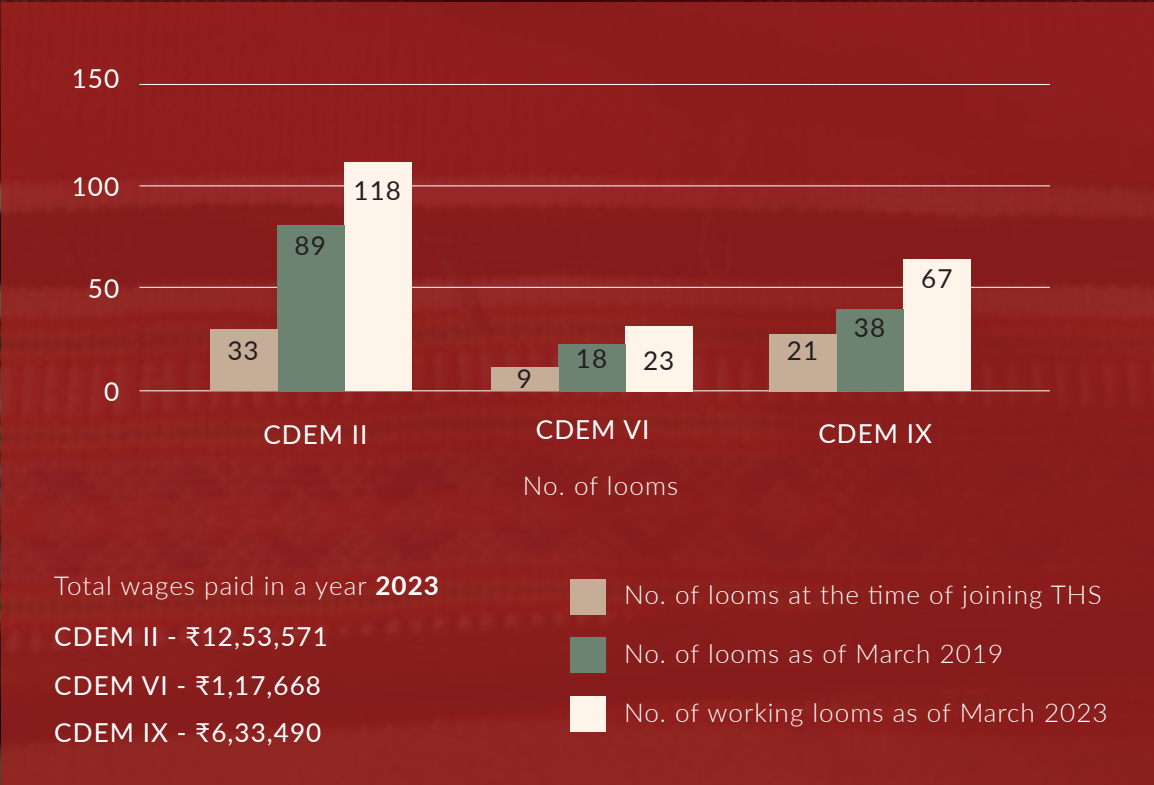
INTRA-PRENEURS:

- **19** graduates have become intra-preneurs, working either as an expert weaver, trainer, or loom supervisor, with an average annual income of **₹2.0 lakh** per year

- The CDEM program cost per beneficiary is **₹196,180**

THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

We have witnessed how THS graduates have gone on to grow their business, thereby generating further and further employment.



CERTIFICATE IN SKILLING THE UNSKILLED (CSTU)

The objective of this 5 month program is to train women from marginalized communities in basic weaving skills. This promotes the woman's financial independence and improves outcomes for her family. At the end of the training program graduates are connected to income generating opportunities within the handloom ecosystem.



Skills Gained

- *Weaving Techniques & Theory: basic to mid-level handloom weaving skills*
- *Costing & Measurements: how to calculate basic product costing and fair wages for one's work*
- *Communication & IT: how to handle a smartphone camera for product photoshoots and communicate via whatsapp*
- *Empowerment: understanding gender rights, how to avail of women aligned government policies and schemes, basic personal money management*
- *Networking & Employment: an informal job fair with local master weavers to source employment opportunities*



CSTU GRADUATE SNAPSHOT

A 30 years old ambitious woman living with her husband and two daughters. She has 8 siblings, her father is a vegetable seller and her husband works in the sand mines as an operator. After her marriage, she learnt to make tassels and fill bobbins here in Maheshwar to support her family. *"I would tie around 10 stoles a day and earn ₹200 out of it"*. She aims to start weaving at her home after the program and has also identified the place to procure the raw material and sell finished products."

“ I never expected that I would get such an opportunity to go to school in my life. I will educate my two daughters who would become my hands to progress weaving and handloom in our family.”

- Rachna Verma



IMPACT METRICS

Established in February **2022**, the CSTU program has trained its first batch of 11 new weavers and is currently training the second batch of **14** weavers

95% of CSTU participants come from non-weaving backgrounds

From the first batch, **7** of the **11** graduates have successfully become regular income earners from weaving

On average, these weavers are now earning **₹66k** per year, increasing their household income by over **40%**

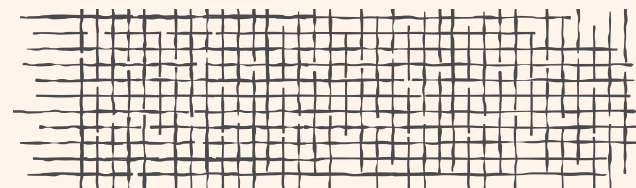
The program cost per CSTU graduate is **₹82,700**





ALUMNI INCUBATION MODULE (AIM)

The Alumni Incubation Module is a planned pilot project of The Handloom School which will focus on improving the business success of alumni of the CDEM program. THS has a network of 152 CDEM graduates from 21 weaving clusters across India. The module will further develop skills and strengthen vital market connections of promising CDEM graduates. It will also provide technical and marketing support to those graduates who still require help to establish a thriving enterprise. The need to develop such a module arose when we observed that for any business to survive the test of the market, some handholding and support are required for the budding entrepreneur.





OBSERVED CHALLENGES

- *Lack of consistent and sustained digital marketing initiatives*
- *Continued difficulty identifying and connecting with new clients*
- *Difficulty differentiating products with new designs or weaving techniques*
- *Lack of access to formal financing, government schemes, or export orders due to gaps in compliance*

PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

- *Digital Communication: a follow-on session on best practices in social media marketing and grassroots e-commerce*
- *Sales & Marketing Support: organizing in person and digital buyer-seller meets and exhibitions*
- *Building Marketing Collaterals: developing “lookbook” presentation templates for graduates and training them in how to update and circulate them*
- *Design & Sampling Support: providing continued guidance in designing collections and sampling new textiles*
- *Compliance Support: informing graduates on the required compliance for tax filing, export / import registration, and training them on how to maintain necessary compliances*

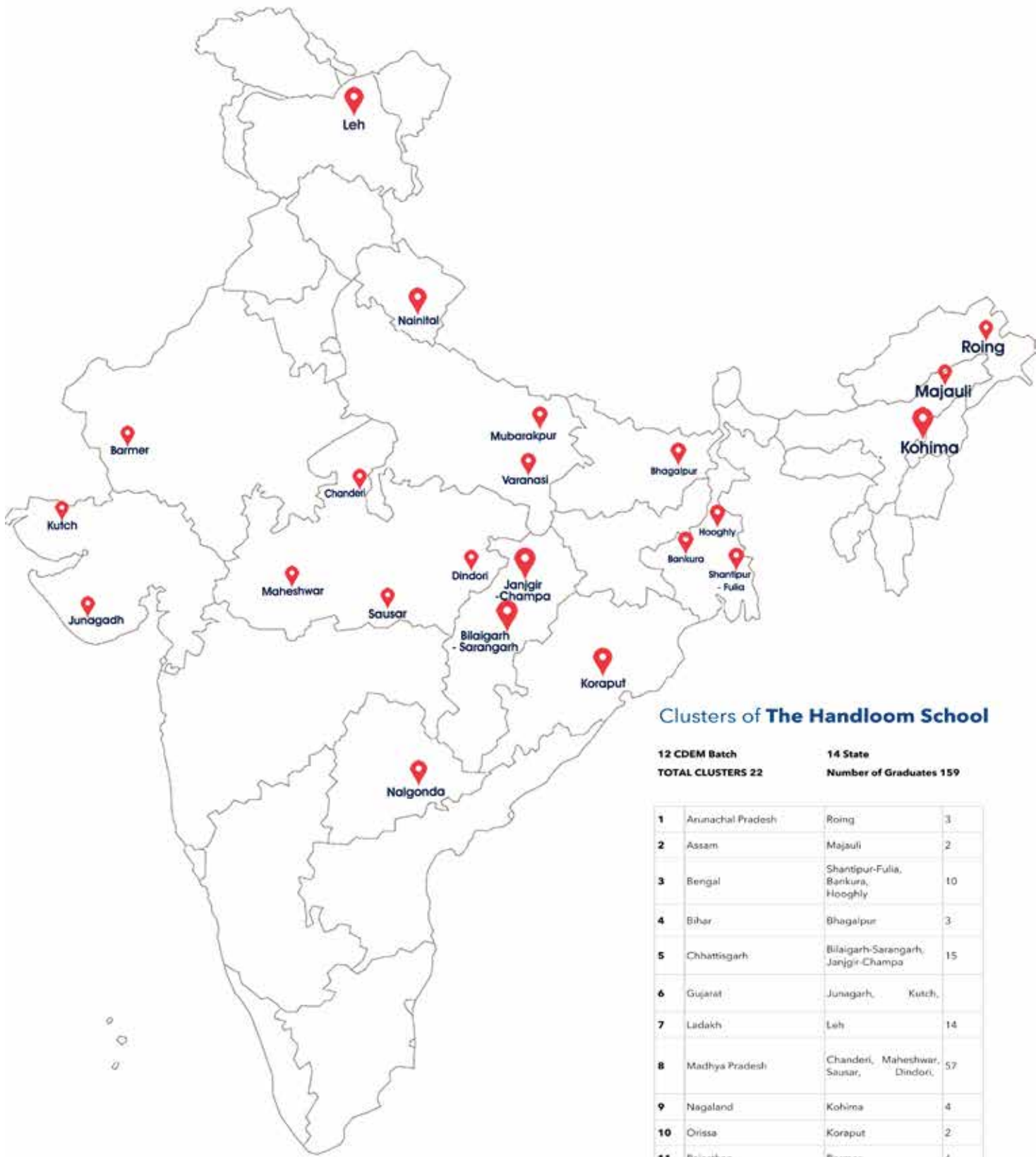


“ After the course I started my own weaving unit, gave work to weavers and implemented new designs to my collection. My work was also going fine, but I am facing problems in increasing my working capital. I cannot expand my business or buy raw materials in bulk because of my struggling financial situation and lack of access to low interest loans.”

- Harun Ansari



Clusters of The Handloom School



The above shared numerical data is as of 2023. In the year 2023 the numbers went up to 167 students from 152 in 2022 and the states and clusters increased as we intervened in a new cluster in Majuli, Assam.

THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL GRADUATES HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH MANY PRESTIGIOUS BRANDS BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND ACROSS THE GLOBE.



THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

In 2023, THS conducted a comprehensive survey followed by ethnographic qualitative interviews with its graduates. In total, 88 graduates responded. Some of the interesting insights we gained from the study have helped us identify other, unexpected ways in which The Handloom School has impacted our graduates' lives.



THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL UPLIFTS MARGINALIZED, CASTE-OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES

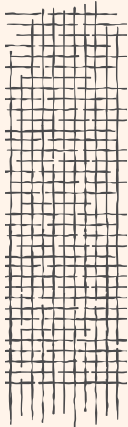
Weaving remains a livelihood practice for those belonging to vulnerable and marginalized castes. The Handloom School is committed to uplifting marginalized communities. 33% of the graduates surveyed this year belong to the OBC category or Scheduled Castes.

“ From Meghwals we have become weavers! It is a long struggle. The Handloom School and other organizations have helped us strengthen and empower ourselves, socially and economically. ”

- Govind

A THS graduate from the village of Barmer, Rajasthan.

Meghwals, Rajasthan's traditional weaving community have been historically looked down on as so-called 'lower castes.' Govind describes how embracing his new identity as a weaver-entrepreneur is more emancipatory than simply being known by his caste.



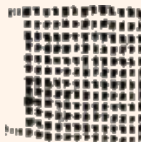
THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL GRADUATES SEE SIGNIFICANT INCOME INCREASES AND FINANCIAL BENEFITS AFTER COMPLETING THE PROGRAM

The Handloom School has empowered weavers to become entrepreneurs and engage with their customers online. 67% said that The Handloom School had a “tremendously significant” impact with regards to building their online business.



Jaheer Khan is in his late 20s and hails from humble Sumakhedi, a village about 30 km from Maheshwar. He never imagined that he could make a decent living from weaving. After being equipped with social media marketing tools at The Handloom School, a key part of the curriculum, most of his retail business takes place in the online marketing space. Thanks to The Handloom School, he successfully connects with his clients mostly through social media.

“My clients are mostly businesswomen who buy the products from me and then sell them further by adding their own profit margins.”



ATTENDING THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL HAS MANY POSITIVE IMPACTS ON WEAVERS’ LIVES, BOTH PERSONALLY AND IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

“Now my kids look up to me. They say our mother is an entrepreneur, a ‘self-made’ businesswoman. My husband is also very proud of what I have managed to create for us.”

- Nisha Verma

A successful entrepreneur and a graduate of the CDEM program



WHILE OUR GRADUATES ARE DOING WELL FINANCIALLY, OUR SURVEY FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT THE NON-ECONOMIC INDICATORS, TOO, HAVE POSITIVE RESULTS. BELOW ARE LISTED SOME OF THESE FINDINGS:

- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Increased awareness of relevant government schemes
- Improved social standing in the community
- Becoming an advocate for weaving in the community
- Motivating young weavers and women to make weaving their primary occupation

81% of graduates said that they had achieved a personal development goal since attending The Handloom School.



THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL DONORS & SUPPORTERS

We would like to thank all our donors for their generous support over the past 10 years, without which none of this work or impact would have been possible.



TATA TRUSTS



THE FUTURE OF THE HANDLOOM SCHOOL

PROGRAMMES AND THEIR ESTIMATED BUDGETS

Our leanings over the past decade of The Handloom School have helped us refine our model to maximize the impact we have for our graduates, their clusters and their crafts. Working closely with our weaving communities, we have developed a three tiered approach to supporting handloom artisans.

- Training the unskilled through our CSTU program, which provides a weaving-based livelihood and new income generation opportunities
- Developing skilled weavers into handloom-entrepreneurs through our CDEM program, enabling a multiplier effect in job creation
- Supporting budding entrepreneurs through our AIM program, ensuring greater sustainability and opportunity for an entire weaving cluster

Our **CSTU** and **CDEM** programs have demonstrated results in terms of income generation, skill development, and incubating successful handloom enterprises. We are confident that our **AIM** program will also act as a much needed catalyst to strengthen successful graduates, and also support those entrepreneurs who require a longer incubation period.

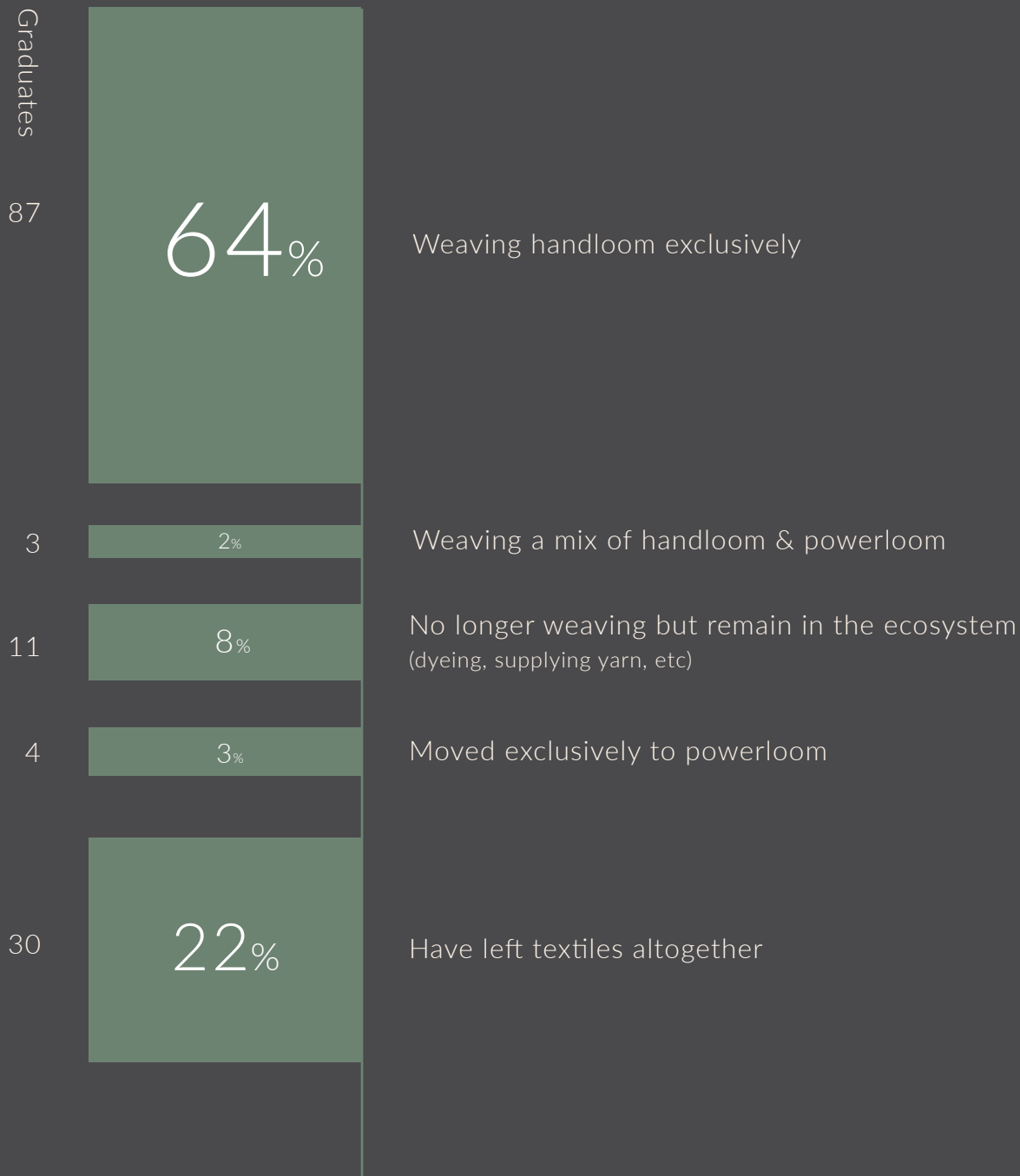
We look forward to having your support for this exciting next phase of The Handloom School's journey.

PROGRAMME	Per Batch Cost		Total Program Cost - 1 yr	Total Program Cost - 3 Yrs	
	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES	PROGRAM COST PER BENEFICIARY	PROGRAM COST	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES	PROGRAM COST
Skilling the Unskilled (CSTU)	20 direct	₹ 82,500	₹16.5 L	60 direct	₹49.5 L
Certificate in Design & Enterprise Management (CDEM)	20 direct + 60 indirect = 80 total	₹50,000	₹40 L	60 direct, 180 indirect i.e 240 beneficiaries	₹1.20 Cr
Alumni Incubation Module (AIM)	50 direct + 500 indirect = 550 total	₹13,300	₹23.5 L	50 direct + 500 indirect	₹73 L



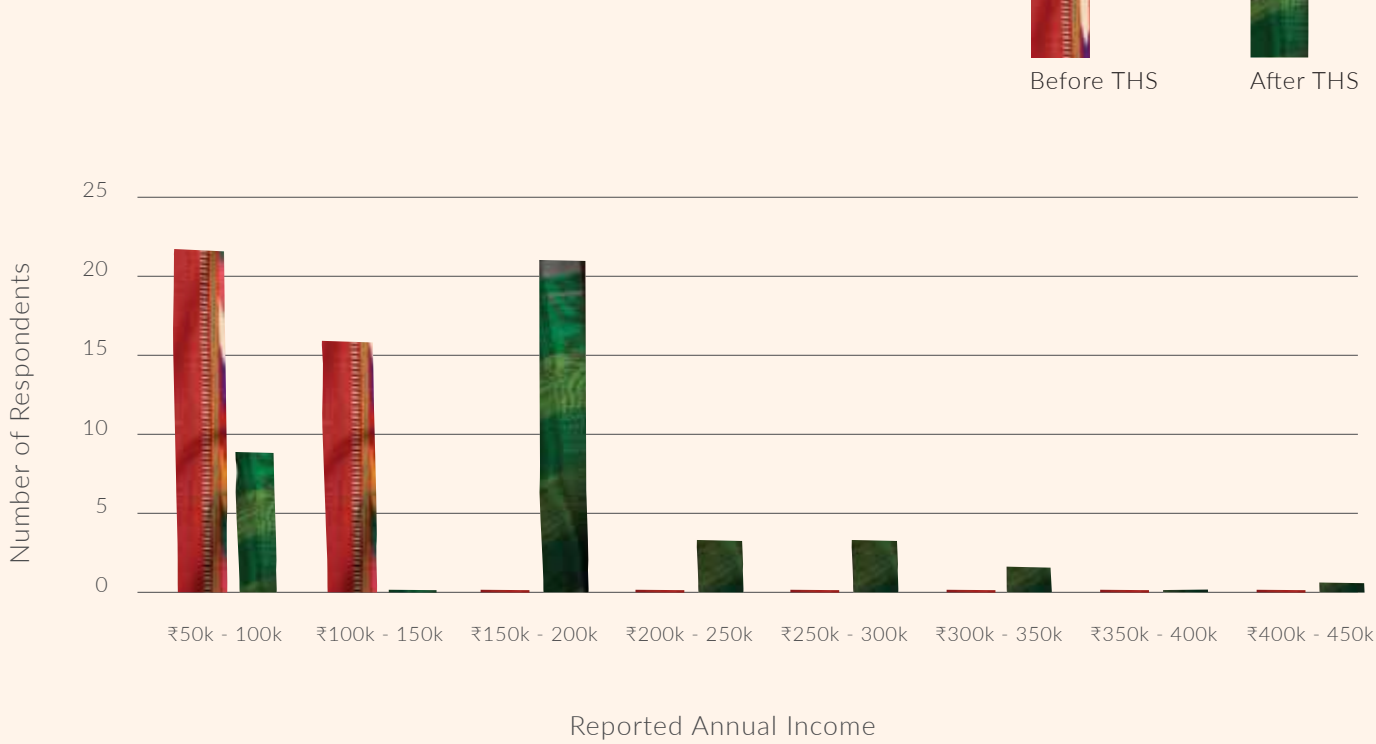
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - Current Occupation of Graduates



*The table above doesn't include recent graduates of the 2022 batch.

APPENDIX B - Impact on CDEM Graduate Income



APPENDIX C - CDEM Entrepreneurs Handloom Ownership Status

		Handloom Status	Production Status		Income Status		Expenditure Status	
Batch	Year	No. of Working Looms as of March 2023	Avg. Monthly Production (Mtr)	Annual Production (Mtr)	Avg. Selling Price/Wage Earned (Mtr)	Annual Turnover (INR)	Total wages paid in a year a/o March 2023	Total Cost of Raw Material in a year
CDEM I	2015	109	520	6240	438	24,08,194	9,51,822	10,18,234
CDEM II	2015	118	462	5549	557	30,66,514	12,53,571	14,17,371
CDEM III	2015	30	213	2561	250	8,09,810	2,30,230	2,50,900
CDEM IV	2016	52	320	3848	159	13,22,300	5,20,296	50,22,320
CDEM V	2016	13	71	863	89	1,46,016	19,968	37,440
CDEM VI	2017	23	142	1704	97	2,77,680	1,17,668	63,514
CDEM VII	2018	25	143	1716	210	6,31,310	2,30,760	2,13,840
CDEM VIII	2018	36	207	2484	275	7,82,436	2,40,960	3,22,080
CDEM IX	2019	67	280	3367	363	15,16,450	6,33,490	5,52,240
CDEM X	2019	4	19	228	89	42,286	0	0

APPENDIX D - Goal Alignment with the SDGs :

SDG 1: ENDING POVERTY

The Handloom School equips young weavers from across the nation with expertise in design, communication technology and entrepreneurial management, among other knowledge, that enables them to earn more for themselves and those they employ, thereby reducing not only economic poverty, but also factors associated with multi-dimensional poverty, such as lack of education and lack of social inclusion.

SDG 4: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Weavers' educational needs are overlooked by the general education system. The Handloom School uniquely provides specific content and an appropriate pedagogical approach to build students' technical and vocational skills and ability to participate in the domestic and global marketplaces that are ready for their specialty products.

SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

Both women and men actively work and are essential to handloom planning, production and sales, making the sector a living example of the possibility of gender equality, even in leadership roles. The Handloom School's 'Skilling the Unskilled' program has been specifically developed to encourage greater female participation.

SDG 8: INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Handloom School is growing the handloom sector to meet and develop market opportunities by creating employable and entrepreneurial youth, particularly women. The majority of people holding heritage skills are members of the marginalized communities and castes, and hence women are the ones that are left out of mainstream economic growth.



APPENDIX E - Current Compliances and Accreditations

Sl	Document Name	Sanctioning Authority	Registration Number	Registration Year	Valid Till
1	Registration Number	GOM, Government of Maharashtra	Credential ID E-21094	Issued Jun 2002	N/A
2	Permanent Account Number - PAN	GOM, Government of Maharashtra	Credential ID AAATW0823B	Issued Nov 2002	N/A
3	Goods and Services Tax	GOI, Income Tax India Official	Credential ID 23AAATW0823B1Z4	Issued Jun 2017	N/A
4	Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR	GOI, Ministry of Corporate Affairs Office of the Registrar of Companies	Credential ID CSR00057741	Issued Aug 2023	N/A
5	80G Certification	GOI, Indian Ministry of Finance	Credential ID AAATW0823BF20216	Issued Oct 2021	Expires : October 2027
6	12AA Certification	GOI, Income Tax India Official	Credential ID AAATW0823BE20218	Issued Sep 2021	Expires : September 2027
7	Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act - FCRA	GOI, Ministry Of Home Affairs (mha)	Credential ID 083781111	Issued October 2023	Expires : October 2028



Scan to view the certificates.

WORDS BY FACULTY

My time with the Handloom School begins just before the official launch of THS. A fortuitous meeting with Sally Holkar on my very first trip to India in 2008 led to an invitation to visit the Gudi Mudi project in Maheshwar. Sally was intrigued with my background in design and long tenure at Gap Inc. and asked if I would do a workshop with a nascent young weaver entrepreneurs program which WomenWeave had recently sponsored.

We set cloth and weaving aside. Instead, we made drawings. We wrote stories. We made giant kites. With sticks and cloth, we created spaces in the garden. We made wire sculptures. We took field trips. In the process each student had to present their ideas to visiting critics and to their parents. Over the course of a few days these young design entrepreneurs developed confidence and individual approaches to design and quickly made the connection between our mini projects and their final assignment - to develop a design to weave.

Little did I know this invitation to visit Maheshwar would profoundly change the course of my career and ignite my interest in mentoring design students. Working with THS has been a privilege and a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with a coterie of designers, educators, and sponsors. What a gift to witness and participate in the creation and ongoing development of THS.

Looking back over fifteen years, it is astonishing to me that a kernel of an idea – to infuse new life and to forge a path to saving an important Indian heritage tradition – has brought so many talented people together. It is pure joy and satisfaction to see the impact of experts and students from all over India and the world coming together to share ideas, to experiment, to discover and to nurture talent.

Thank you Sally Holkar.

Jefferey Oakes

Founder of Jeff Oakes Design
and Jeff Gallery in San Francisco



Seeing students at The Handloom School come to understand their potential as weavers and entrepreneurs is profoundly gratifying. Though most of my teaching is in The United States and Europe, I have been lucky to teach English and Communication at THS since its earliest beginnings on the rooftop of WomenWeave Charitable Trust in Maheshwar.

Many aspects of The Handloom School impress and inspire me, in part because they relate to my academic research about the theoretical and real economic, social, aesthetic, and sustainability benefits of artisan-made fabric and fashion.

The Handloom School is a lean, purpose-driven, grassroots organization. THS’s curriculums, teachers and staff whole-heartedly work with enthusiastic and motivated students from various clusters in India to help them gain and improve the business, design, and communication skills that they need to participate, earn and ultimately lead and develop India’s heritage handloom sector. Moreover, we are concerned with developing students’ pride in their work, themselves, and their craft heritage to support their journey to becoming responsible citizens and change agents.

Of the several schools I am associated with, The Handloom School is the most relevant, the most effective, and the most valuable to society, as we find ourselves reaching for better and more meaningful ways of making and using cloth.



David Goldsmith

Professor at Parsons School of Design, USA

As a cooperative society working to promote the crafts industry in Maldives, Maldives Authentic Crafts Cooperative Society (MACCS) is delighted to come across the ‘Handloom Weaving’ program offered by the Handloom School.

The Handloom School, by WomenWeave is one-of-its-kind for learning handloom weaving. The school’s structured training program is something we could not find elsewhere and it enabled us to send our students abroad.

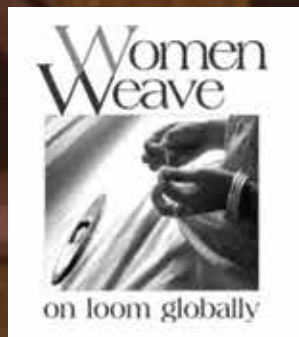
We would like to note that the School’s administration is very accommodating with the admission process and made special arrangements for our students. According to one of our students who participated in the program, “It was a family experience”. The only hindrance to note is language barrier. However, our student was well versed in Hindi so she had no issue with completing the program and is ready to begin her journey into handloom weaving to revive weaving in Maldives.

Big thank you to The Handloom School!



Aminath Abdulla

Chairperson
Maldives Authentic Crafts Cooperative Society (MACCS)



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