



ayo!

## Shuhel

### Goal

Reanimation of self-efficacy, independence and psychological /physical integrity among underprivileged women through meaningful and creative entrepreneurial practices and co-creation of empowering environment.

### Objective

Further development of "Shuhel" handicrafts club to serve women with disadvantaged backgrounds as a platform to unlock their true potential by skill-based working and earning, as well as develop new professional and social skills, physical/mental health awareness and a capacity to empower other women as role models.

## Project Description & Background

**Shuhel's** vision is rooted in the larger philosophy of supporting social equity and mitigating social exclusion, with a primary focus on women who have confronted dire circumstances and deprivation in their lives, lacking proper higher education, vocational skills and opportunities for self-development, career or social networking. What was at the time of its creation a small discussion group for women with similar stories and issues in 2017, has gradually grown into a hub for motivation and empowerment. Here beneficiaries of **Women's Resource Center Armenia**, who were survivors of domestic and sexual violence and strugglers for living to support their families in the past, can now exercise and develop their embroidery, pastry baking, sewing, crocheting, jewelry-making and other skills, turning them into marketable products. Aside from the dignifying personal fulfilment, this self-sustaining business also earns them the desired financial independence that equips them with the confidence to push their limits all the more vigorously in other aspects of their lives as well. By generating income independently, previously marginalized women, by and large, invest in themselves, shifting the paradigm of their personal lives from being patronized to steering their welfare at their own pace and preference.

The quality of life of the Shuhel members improves in multiple ways- from the sense of belonging to a pleasurable and safe space for self-expression to revealing novel insights of better self-management and access to sustainable health care. Here are some of the ways these targets are met:

- **Social Enterprise:** The members of Shuhel perform energetically to generate revenue. Predominantly lacking work experience in the past and victim to age discrimination, many of them have faced the excruciating neglect of the labor market, to finally find a safe harbor in Shuhel to display their talents. Their products have since been promoted and marketed in diverse areas, enjoying publicity and inspiring new enthusiasts.
- **Skills workshops:** Shuhel members have an opportunity to develop and explore new creative knack for production and sales. Not only do they strive for personal and collective excellence, but are also passionate about delivering master classes to spark inspiration in others as well.
- **Social/Cultural activities:** In the framework of occasional excursions and gatherings Shuhel members enjoy the freedom of inside-out self-expression, unmasking many daily issues they face as women. The intimacy stemming from this openness infallibly creates a safe space to share, learn, contemplate and encourage, free of judgement and intimidation.
- **Educational talks with health care (including mental health) professionals:** Many Shuhel members lack sufficient insights on their physical and mental health needs, particularly in relation to their sexual and reproductive health. In part, this is explained by the engrained perception or the unyielding social construct in the Armenian society that portrays a woman as the caregiver of the family, often overshadowing her own personal needs. This increases the risk of ignorance of their own health issues which, eventually, disempowers them as members of society and imperils the chance to preserve or regain health in the long run. Also, one of the pivotal aims of the project is raising sufficient funds to secure systematic health screenings, examinations /assessments and treatment for the Shuhel members where necessary.



## Budget

To secure uninterrupted progress and further reinforcement of collective efforts, the Shuhel project requires certain financial support. The funds will be channeled in the following directions:

ITEM	QTY	UNIT PRICE AMD	TOTAL AMD
• Purchase of materials (e.g. threads, jewelry findings, epoxy, etc.)	Lump Sum	Lump Sum	1,200,000
• Physical and psychological health care of members, basic treatments	10 women	150,000	1,500,000
• Workshops/activities to directed towards raising awareness and mastering new skills	7	20,000	140,000
• Branding and marketing expenses (offline/online)	Lump Sum	Lump Sum	400,000
• Admin cost (monthly social/cultural activities, coffee break)			200,000
• State registration fees/accounting			300,000

The exchange rate as of January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
1 USD = 470 AMD

TOTAL

₴3,740,000