



Hope for the Hopeless

WorldCrafts and Manna Madagascar enable women to leave prostitution behind.

*This is the eighth in a series of monthly articles as part of the **WorldCrafts**™ Set1Free campaign. This campaign highlights **WorldCrafts** artisan groups working to end sexual exploitation and human trafficking among the world's poor.*

Many impoverished women in Madagascar wake up each day facing a set of challenges most Americans can scarcely fathom:

- **Abandonment:** The meager income provided by your husband disappeared when he left town a few weeks ago.
- **Sickness:** You have no money for medicine to cure the malaria that becomes more debilitating each time you contract it.
- **Sanitation problems:** The dirty stream near your home provides all your water since the government started charging for well water.
- **Hunger:** There's no food for your five children. School is but a dream they dare not imagine.
- **Homelessness:** The landlord refuses to wait any longer for your rent, now three months overdue.



hopeless circumstances, turn to prostitution as a means of taking care of their families. Some consider it immoral, but believe they have no alternative. Others have grown up in families where prostitution is considered a normal lifestyle choice—making the transition a smooth one, sometimes in the early teenage years. And

even those women who find their way into factory jobs are often faced with harassment and expectations of sexual favors in return for job security.

It was in this context that Manna Madagascar started microenterprise opportunities for women to earn a dignified living. Capitalizing on the women's incredible handcraft skills, Manna began exporting embroidered and raffia products made exclusively for **WorldCrafts**. The impact has been enormous. Not only are women providing for the financial needs of their families, many have left behind lives of begging and prostitution.

One such woman, Soa*, found her way into a Manna embroidery center run by a local pastor's wife, Fanja. Soa came to learn a skill that could earn her some extra money. At the center she was mentored not only in embroidery but also in living a godly life. Prayer, Christian songs, and Bible reading are all a part of the regular workweek. As women gather around on mats and cushions, taking a break from their sewing, Fanja shares her faith and teaches about depending on God for everything. She tells them that God's design for our lives is the very best way we could possibly live.

Fanja has seen many lives change over the years and has trusted God to provide the orders that keep the women working. She and the women in her center are grateful for the many orders from **WorldCrafts**, which not only keep them working but give them an opportunity to share their God-given talents and Malagasy culture with people in such a faraway land, the United States.

*Name changed to respect privacy.

Such scenarios are not unusual for Malagasy women, who have few opportunities to find legitimate work. Sadly, many of them, when faced with such seemingly

Your purchase of these handmade items from **WorldCrafts** allows Manna Madagascar to provide a living wage to women at risk of sexual exploitation on the island. As **WorldCrafts** orders additional products from Manna Madagascar, this artisan group can help set more women free, providing them spiritual hope and a sustainable lifestyle.

WorldCrafts is part of the Fair Trade Federation. Please check our Web site for more products and stories! For a free catalog, call 1-800-968-7301. Join us on Facebook! WorldCrafts is a ministry of WMU®.



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