

Caribbean Craft

Rebuilding a Niche After Disaster

Many people would probably not think of colorful paintings, exotic beads and intricate jewelry, or stylish papier-mâché giraffes, reindeer, rabbits, stylish bags or gift boxes, when they think of Haiti, but there is a thriving artistic community in the capital city of Port-au-Prince, and there always has been.

For example, Caribbean Craft is a private company formed in the 1990s to export island art around the world, and to help solve the pressing problems of high unemployment in the country. More than 349 artists and craft employed workers gather in the factory to create the handicrafts.

Although the earthquake destroyed the factory, the founder of the company moved production into her home while the rebuilding of new headquarters was in progress. Today, some of the artists are still living in tents, having lost their homes in the disaster, but they receive a good salary, and generous benefits including hot meals, medical care, and no-interest loans.

Lesson: Even in the midst of economic chaos, businesses can survive and prosper.

References

Oprah's Next Chapter. (2012). Hope for Haiti. OWN Network
http://www.caribbean-craft.com/shop/auxpage_1/