

TRASH-TO-CASH: A FLOWERING BUSINESS



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In India, bright pink and marigold flowers are bringing people happiness in a new way: as a marketable flower-based powder.

The Society for Child Development's 'Trash-to-Cash' program collects discarded flowers from temples and hotels in Dehli and then turns the flower waste into skin-friendly, coloured pigments for Hindu festivals. The society is aiming to not only reduce waste, but to also create livelihoods by giving intellectually challenged young adults the skills to produce these vibrant materials.

Flower petals are first sorted by colour and then shredded, dried and powdered, resulting in Rangoli powder and Holi colours. Clinical psychologist Dr. Madhumita Puri, the founder of the society, explains that the process of creating these powders offers a calming and aromatic experience for

participants. In addition, the young adults in the program gain skills as well as the opportunity to earn a living and contribute to their families economically. In recognition of the program's positive impacts, the United Nations awarded the society with an ESCAP-Sasakawa Award in the 'Disability-Inclusive Entrepreneurial Business Category'.

Key to advancing opportunities and livelihoods is the marketability of the powders themselves. Marketed under the brand 'Avacayam', business has grown 150% in the last year alone and the society has recently been taken on as a supplier to Walmart.

This year, the society has produced 18 tonnes of flower powder and they have expanded business into the creation of papier-mache lamps and bags made from recycled cloth.



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