

20 OUTSTANDING *women* YOU SHOULD KNOW



SINEAD FYDA

USING FASHION TO SAVE LIVES

*Sinead Fyda leaves her
career to help Tanzanian
women*



Sinead Fyda had a career that some people dream of. Sinead was living in New York City as an accomplished fashion expert with what seemed to be the world at her fingertips, yet something was missing. In an effort to fill the void, Sinead resigned from the career that she had worked so hard to build and signed up for a Tanzanian volunteer placement organization. Before she knew it, she was on a plane to Tanzania to take part in what was supposed to be a three-week program.

Assigned as a kindergarten teacher, Sinead quickly fell in love with the people of the village in which she was working and soon made a commitment to stretch her obligation from three weeks to three months. Seeing the level of poverty that these Tanzanian families faced inspired Sinead to help improve the quality of life of the Tanzanian families.

Returning to the United States long enough to move her belongings back to Ohio from her previous home in New York, Sinead quickly returned to Tanzania with a specific goal to help the women who

couldn't even afford the small cost of a bus fare to the next city. The women she set out to help were supporting their families on a budget of \$8 per week, and oftentimes the women had up to seven children. It was no easy task, but Sinead began interviewing each of the women to see how their quality of life could be improved.

After extensive research on nonprofit organizations and entrepreneurialism, Sinead hoped to use what business strategies she had learned to fight the poverty in Tanzania. Using her research and experience in the fashion industry, Sinead formed Jishike Social Couture.

"Jishike" is a Swahili word meaning "hold on to your strength," and her organization's initiative is to teach Tanzanian women how to crochet clothing and fashion accessories that Sinead would in turn sell to Americans, providing the Tanzanian women 30% of the revenues with the remainder going back into the organization for new materials and projects. Jishike Social Couture began by making booties for babies and evolved into making fash-

ionable clutches and handbags.

Since 2009, Jishike Social Couture has grown from nine Tanzanian women to twenty-two. Sinead's program also teaches Tanzanian women responsibility in handling their income as well as the value of their work: the better the product that the women are able to produce, the more profitable it will be for them. Being a part of the program means that the women have agreed to not spend the money they earn on drugs or alcohol – a tremendous change in the lifestyles and demeanor of the women.

Sinead wants nothing more than to create opportunity for the women that she helps, making way more opportunity to do what they desire.

If you would like to learn more about Jishike Social Couture, or to purchase any of the products produced by the organization, please visit <http://www.JishikeSocialCouture.com>.

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