

The power of women's art!

Some years ago, as a result of financial difficulties and a needed sense of unity, a group of Kufundees-women started to meet and bead.

So the year 2011 saw the beginning of a journey that is still going on today.

The original purpose of having these meetings was primarily:

To create art and income with the available resources already present in Kufunda.

So, the women went collecting seeds in the forest and experimenting, sharing, facing difficulties and eventually succeeding in craft making and selling. They became skilled in jewellery making! The circles are nowadays held with a regularity of once a month. The meetings helped many women to find out more about themselves and their passions. Sharing stories, getting support and advices from each other helped women with daily problems, thanks to the power of collective intelligence. But beading is not only done in a circle, many women also work in their houses, with their families or alone. Thanks to this safe and creative-fertile space new projects and ideas were born as crocheting. The whole practice of handcraft became valuable in the understanding of life.

Today the economical aspect is still very alive and it remains one of the main reasons of making jewellery, but there is also an important value in having the opportunity to share with other women daily problems and joys. These women have created a space where they are able to fully express the art and beauty inside each of them.



The best thing to explain something is to let the protagonist of the story talk. Scrolling down, dear reader, you'll find the voice of Kufunda's women and a picture of each of them wearing proudly their own crafts.



"Making jewellery brings out the beauty inside me; it is a way to express my art and creativity."



Sikhethiwe Mlotsha

My name is Sikhethiwe Mlotsha. I was born and I live in Zimbabwe, I'm married and have three kids (boys).

I was inspired by Women and Leadership programme at the Annual Conference of the Authentic Leadership in Action Institute (ALIA) in the US in 2011. This programme motivated us to co-create a women's group at Kufunda.

Making jewellery brings out the beauty inside me, it is a way to express my art and my creativity. While I bead I have my own space where I can meditate and where I can find joy and quietness in me. I became more aware about the importance to create space for myself with the years. Beading is also a way to bring Kufunda's women together. It is a moment where we question each other, where we share time and interest and where we get to know each other better. With the time beading moments became moments where through creativity new ideas were born. One of the projects we started is crocheting and working with wool. Creating the jewellery is also a way to sustain my family economically.



"Personally, I get to know of new designs in my dream. Sometimes while I sleep I dream of new patterns and then when I wake up I do it"



Annah Benedicto

*My name is Annah Benedicto, am a mother of three kids, two boys and one girl.
I am also the Pre-School Teacher at Kufunda Learning Village.*

Selling the jewellery is a financial support for my family and especially for my children. It helps me to relax and not to worry too much about my family's economic situation. We, women of Kufunda, make sometimes jewellery together and in those moments we share stories and we teach each other new patterns and designs. It is a wonderful way to communicate and spend time together. Personally, I get to know of new designs in my dream. Sometimes while I sleep I dream of new patterns and then when I wake up I do it. I'm really passionate in hand crafts and when I do my jewellery I'm fully concentrated on my work. For this reason I like to work either alone or with people doing the same things but I don't like to have distractions around me.



"This project started when Kufunda was still "young"(...). Thanks to jewellery we managed to pay all the necessary costs for the family."



Tsitsi Mayakaza

My name is Tsitsi Mayakaza, I have lived at Kufunda Learning Village since 2008 after completing a Kufunda Youth Internship Workshop. I am a mature mother of four children. Through thick and thin I am doing my best to send all these children to school.

This project started when Kufunda was still "young". We didn't have proper salary to live. Thanks to the jewellery we managed to pay all the necessary costs for the family and it helped me to pay the examination fees for my children.

Making jewellery is when we have our own time as women where we empower each other and it is where I take out my strengths.

I also make jewellery by myself, creating my own time. I like to be creative by using natural resources as the seeds that we find here around Kufunda, we collect them and then in order to make jewellery we need to use the drill. Using tools that are usually in the hands of men help us women to be brave and to be more successful as women.



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Loveness Tenis

I'm 25 and I'm a mother of 3 girls. I live here at Kufunda since an early age because my mother and my father came here to work. Some years ago I got married and now I live in the village with my family.

I like to share stories with other women.

I don't have other work, so the jewellery project is important to me. It is beautiful to sit and bead instead of doing nothing. I discovered this passion of using my hands and create art out of them. I like to use my creativity to do something that can even help my family financially.



"Today I even teach this art craft to the kids to help them to develop art, creativity, and sustainability at the same time"



Patricia Mutsvandiyan

My name is Patricia Mutsvandiyan, I'm married and I have two children, a boy and a girl.

*I am a former Pre School Teacher at Kufunda Learning Village
and now working in the Herb Project.*

I am also a Fashion Designer hence now am involved in the jewellery Project.

My mother was already a jewellery artist. When I started I firstly thought at the advantage of incomes, but during the process of creating jewellery something has changed. I started to involve my family and beading became a way to share time with them. So I consider beading as gift for my family. Today I even teach this art craft to the kids to help them to develop art, creativity, and sustainability at the same time. When I bead alone I focus on the manual work and it has become a good way to loose stress. Sometimes I even create jewellery when I have some challenges in my life, it helps me to calm and see the things differently.



"Meeting is not only a matter of creating designs, for me it is a moment where I learn about social relationships"



Anna Tennis

My name is Anna Tennis, I am a mother of three boys and I'm the Assistant Teacher at Kufunda Learning Village Pre-school.

For me making jewellery is a way to sustain economically myself and being creative. I like to bead with other women, to share stories, problems and to find solutions together. From them and with them I learn new patterns and designs. Meeting is not only a matter of creating designs, for me it is a moment where I learn about social relationships.

While I bead I focus completely on my work and it is a good way to relax and to let go of daily problems. In these years I have learned more about my creativity, about technique and patterns. I discovered that sometimes the pattern come from the heart and sometimes from the mind.



“Today we consider handcrafts differently and we look at it in a creative way. We discover that many things are possible.”



Sekesai Mariyapera

My name is Sekesai Mariyapera.

I am a Zimbabwean, a widow and have four kids. My husband died in 2004 and I had some struggles with raising my kids. I am HIV positive.

Beading with other women is a moment of learning for me. When we work together we share problems, discuss and find solutions to them.

Sometimes I bead alone and sometimes in the group, but I don't like very much to work alone because when I'm there by my own a lot of thoughts come in my mind and is not always pleasant. For me it is much better to work in the group.

As we started we were only making jewellery but now many other creative projects popped up. For example we started to do chiffon and scarfs crocheting. Today we consider handcrafts differently, and we look at it in a creative way. We discover that many things are possible.



"I mostly follow my own idea of patterns because I don't want to fulfil the expectation of others, but rather give voice to my personal creativity."



Janet Mwase

I'm 21 years old.

I live at Kufunda with my family and I'm the mother of a little girl. I started to join the women's circle in 2013.

I'm not employed and the jewellery is a way to generate income and to get busy creating some art from the heart.

Sometimes I feel I want to do something beautiful and the jewellery is my way of expressing this beauty. I mostly follow my own ideas of patterns because I don't want to fulfil the expectation of others, but rather give voice to my personal creativity. I feel that my passion grows more and more as well as my ability and creativity.



"For me it is an opportunity to concentrate on my work and spend time with other women and children."



Maria Pingiza

I'm Maria Pingiza, I'm the mother of four children. I'm from Mozambique and we are 5 brothers and sisters in our family. I live and work at Kufunda.

I joined the group of women making jewellery shortly after they started to meet. For me it is an opportunity to concentrate on my work and spend time with other women and children. I like to be creative and do something beautiful with my hands. Many designs and pattern show up to me while I bead and while I prepare the material to create art. But even better is to share ideas, designs and stay with others.



"In our culture when you do not have a husband there is lack of dignity, but I have learnt through the women's circle to accept myself as I am."



Lucia Manja

My name is Lucia. I'm mother of 5 children and am a widow. My husband passed away in 2005 and life was never the same. I faced a lot of challenges in raising my children. In our culture when you do not have a husband there is lack of dignity, but I have learnt through the women's circle to accept myself as I am.

We started beading at the time when Kufunda didn't have money, so we went in the bush to collect seeds and we started to create art out of what we had. The beading project was born to sustain Kufunda families. Thanks to the jewellery we could pay fees for the school of our children. When we sit together we put collectively ideas in the middle for everybody. When I bead I think at new designs to make unique pieces.

