

Success stories

Catherine Mahugu

Soko

www.shopsoko.com



Catherine Mahugu is the founder of Soko, a women-owned and -operated social enterprise that empowers craftswomen to become global entrepreneurs. Soko was created by women for women to help “fashion a better world” through equitable direct trade of beautiful goods between artisans in the developing world and web consumers worldwide. Soko is an online destination for shoppers to discover stunning handcrafted accessories from all over the world and purchase them directly from their designers. Using Soko on a simple mobile phone, designers and artisans in the developing world can upload and sell their jewelry pieces online, with no need for a computer or a bank account. Over the past 12 months, Soko has made significant progress. We have carried out a test pilot of our mobile platform in India, increased our vendor market by partnering with telcos, established a footprint in Asia, Latin America and Africa and won awards such as DEMO Africa. In April 2012, we successfully launched our public website as well as fulfilling our seed funding round of \$700,000. Soko is making an effort to pioneer social impact assessment monitoring and evaluation in our community of artisans, aiming for sustainability in business for our producers.