

KOKOworld – an ethical brand for women created by a woman



By Rozalia Wiśniowska, FairTrade Poland

Agata felt that working in a corporation was not her cup of tea. She packed her necessities and set off on a trip to Africa. It was there, at the Music Festival in Mali, where she met people who made her realize that she can create her own path in life. “Why not combine my passion for music, dance, long journeys and handicrafts into one?” – she thought. Thanks to her persistence, imagination and incredible sensitivity, after months of work and travel with her little daughter in search of authentic handicrafts, the project of combining craftsmen from Africa, South America, Southeast Asia and Poland has become real. This is exactly how 10 years ago KOKOworld was created – an ethical brand with products made with respect to people and the environment – connecting the farthest ends of the world, tailors from Senegal and Poland, handicraftsmen from Indonesia with leathercraft makers from Krakow, bringing together traditions and cultures of different corners of the world.

The idea of sustainable and responsible fashion has guided the KOKOworld brand since its commencement. Agata’s company is still working on expanding their list of responsible materials, such as organic cotton or tencel. While creating new collections, Agata and her team use even the smallest scraps of materials. This has become an element of finishing or patch making, in order to make each piece of clothing unique. Two years ago, the brand started collaborating with Fairtrade organisation. This partnership resulted in a new collection of clothes made from Fairtrade organic cotton, sewn in a certified factory in India.

In addition to creating and selling responsible clothes, KOKOworld is involved in charity actions. In 2017 and 2019, the brand carried out the “Jeans for a better world” campaign. First, for several

months, KOKOworld collected used jeans. Afterwards, they partnered with Krakow craftspeople, to design and sew completely new clothes and accessories from old jeans. Finally, they conducted an auction from which the total proceeds were allocated to fund research scholarships for girls from Cape Verde.

In November 2019, KOKOworld organized Green Friday – an alternative Black Friday. From which, ten percent of the sales were donated to the Buy Responsibly Foundation, which fights to improve the living conditions of seamstresses.



Another example of KOKOworld's social involvement is this year's support action for Eduardo – a craftsman from Colombia. He is a social activist with the soul of an artist – thanks to creating jewelry, he gives work to single mothers and supports women in prison. For several years, KOKOworld has been cooperating with him by distributing his handicraft. This year, the

pandemic has put Eduardo in a very difficult position. There are no tourists in his town so he cannot sell jewelry, therefore, he cannot provide jobs for women, as a result, he and his family are destitute. To help the craftsman, the brand organized a pre-order for his jewelry. The interest of customers in his jewelry, exceeded the expectations of KOKOworld and Eduardo. The income from the pre-order was immediately donated to the craftsman. Thanks to that he and his family could survive this difficult time.

Agata started out alone but now she manages a team of over a dozen people. KOKOworld is a brand, open to the whole world – their clothes are liked not only by Polish women but also by women from Western Europe (mainly Germany and United Kingdom), United States and Australia.

