

IMANI COLLECTIVE



Our Story Through the Eyes of Our Founder

OUR ROOTS

Imani Collective is rooted in hope, imagination and opportunity. It started when I saw the glimmer of hope and felt the desire for change in women that later have grown to be my friends, my community and my family. It was more than just a quick trip and a young girl wanting to “change the world”- I knew that I needed to respond, to act and to use my resources to extend opportunities to these women. It was about creating a dignified space for women to grow and dream just as I did everyday. I believed and continue to believe in their greatness, their aspirations and their incredible capacity and I wanted my sisters to be surrounded by a community that saw their highest selves and confidently stood behind them.

I first went to Kenya in 2009 and continued to travel there to help with projects for the next four years. It was then that I decided to sell everything (including my truck, which is a big deal for a Texas girl!) to start Imani Collective. I used that money to purchase the first 16 sewing machines and in May 2013 our story boldly began to unfold. As the founder, I have been able to see our story come alive, change and respond to our women over the last five years. What started as a program that taught basic artisan skills so that our women, my sisters, could provide for themselves has rapidly turned into so much more. I walked away from our first training class knowing that sustainable change required growth opportunities beyond just job skills. **Seventy percent** of our women had never stepped foot into a classroom- meaning they did not know their numbers, how to read or how to write. It was revelations like this that aided my understanding of why there were generational cycles of poverty and ultimately molded Imani Collective into what it is today.

Imani Collective gives our women access to education, to opportunities, to growth, to community and ensures that they are empowered through it all. From the beginning, it was clear that to truly create change that would result in these women rising above poverty, we needed to be about impacting the whole person. Imani Collective empowers artisans to not just know, but to see their best self shine through to the world.

Together, we unleash a woman's greatness through empowerment, opportunity + community.

OUR WHY

Our focus is on the whole person and our desire is to create sustainable long-term, generational change. We care about socioeconomic empowerment for the single, widowed and disadvantaged women of our community in Kenya as we believe that women and their children hold the key to this social change. We know, as the World Bank reports, that when women rise in the economy, the whole country rises. We know that to rise above poverty, we need to invest in the physical, emotional, social and spiritual well-being of both our women and their families. We want to see them thrive in this life and not merely survive and we know that empowering women through dignified employment, education, and a supportive community will not only advance their present circumstances but will ultimately change the next generation as well.

We wanted to go beyond just providing a consistent wage, we want to unleash our women's dreams, talents and knowledge, so they can be the very best version of themselves.

We are convinced that we aren't just better together - we're our best together.

The holistic programs/benefits we currently offer in our program include:

- + Consistent monthly salaries
(51% above the international poverty line that 40% of the country lives below)
- + Child Enrichment: Free curriculum based, in-house childcare
- + Food Program: Two nutritious meals daily to fuel our artisans
- + Home visits: Twice monthly gatherings with artisan's family to share life and food
- + Personal budgeting assistance
- + English literacy classes: Taught weekly by an ESL Specialist
- + RISE: Personal Development Courses (Realize Internal Self Excellence)
- + Professional Development Seminars
- + Emergency Medical Assistance
- + Dream Management: Intentional one-on-one meetings to dream, discuss and create practical next-steps to achieving goals
- + Children Education Tuition Sponsorships

OUR PROMISE

Our promise is to always ignite a fire of passion, love and grace in our women.

Our promise is to cultivate a contagious community that is filled with empowerment and love.

Our promise is to uphold the whole person, always.

Our promise is to daily remind our women that they are worthy of this opportunity.

Our promise is to keep the person before the product, no matter what the cost.

Our promise is to connect and collaborate with brands and individuals who are ethically minded and truly care about the women behind the product.

Our promise is to be a beacon of light in dark places.

Our promise is to daily share our story.

Our promise is to never lose sight of the glimmer of hope that started it all.

This is only the beginning.

Will you be a part of it?



Jenny, founder of Imani Collective

