

The Kazuri Story

Kazuri Founder - Lady Susan Wood was born (1918) in a mud hut in an African village. Her parents were missionaries from England in the Ituri Forest. Lady Wood was sent back to England to be educated and married Michael Wood, a surgeon. They came to Kenya in 1947. They were dedicated to making a difference and Lady Wood started a coffee plantation on the Karen Blixen estate, famous from the award winning movie "Out of Africa" , at the foot of the Ngon'g Hills, about 30 minutes from the bustling Nairobi city center in Kenya. Lady Wood was a visionary, an unsung hero of her time. She assisted her husband in founding the East African Flying Doctor Service, which expanded into the African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) of which Michael Wood was Director General for 29 years. Michael Wood was knighted in 1985.

The beginnings of Kazuri Beads



In 1975, Lady Susan Wood set up a fledging business making beads in a small shed in her back garden. She started by hiring two disadvantaged women, and quickly realized that there were many more women who were in need of jobs and so Kazuri Beads was created and began its long and successful journey as a help center for the needy women especially single mothers who had no other source of income. In 1988 Kazuri became a factory and expanded hugely with over 120 women and men. Here women are trained and apply their skills to produce these unique and beautiful beads and jewelry. The beads are made with clay from the Mt Kenya area thus giving them authenticity to their craft. The factory acts as a social gathering with the hum of voices continuing throughout the day. With unemployment so high, one jobholder often ends up providing for an "extended family" of 20 or more. Kazuri is a member of the World Fair Trade Organization.

Kazuri Beads Today

Today Kazuri, the Swahili word for 'small and beautiful' produces a wide range of hand made, hand painted ceramic jewelry that shines with a kaleidoscope of African colors and Kenyan art that reflects a culture and appeal to a worldwide fashion market. Kazuri's beautifully finished products are made to an international standard and are sold worldwide. These standards are maintained through high training standards and a highly motivated management team.

In 2001 Mark and Regina Newman bought the company and their goal is to further increase the size of the company and to maintain the guiding philosophy ... to provide employment opportunities for disadvantaged members of Kenyan Society.

