



Monday 28 July 2014

Global Sisters

## **THE SNOW FOUNDATION AND GLOBAL SISTERS: WORKING TOGETHER TO SET WOMEN UP FOR SUCCESS.**

**Canberra has quickly emerged as the national focal point of a new online platform that's helping excluded women to earn an income and find security through their own business.**

The Snow Foundation is delighted to be supporting Global Sisters, an organisation that has quickly found a strong following in the Canberra region thanks to a hard-working, dedicated and innovative group of business leaders, community workers and refugee women.

So far, the Foundation has provided initial funding to establish the website and has also contributed to the creation of the first micro-loans fund.

Global Sisters ([www.globalsisters.org](http://www.globalsisters.org)), is the brainchild of Mandy Richards, a passionate entrepreneur of some 20 years experience who is well-known locally as the inaugural manager of the highly successful ACT Social Enterprise Hub.

Now based in Sydney, Mandy has since worked with the Hamlin Fistula Hospitals in Ethiopia to set up a new foundation, and with the Botswana government on a business incubation program.

Mandy said Global Sisters is the only organisation of its type to use a 'start to finish' model that specifically focuses on marginalised women in Australia.

"The women we're working with are very economically disadvantaged and face extreme social isolation due to a number of barriers such as cultural differences, language, mental illness and generational unemployment," she said.

"Of course, we know the benefits of meaningful employment go far beyond just earning an income. Employment contributes to better self-esteem and overall wellbeing for the individual, and impacts positively on the surrounding community, including children.

"Global Sisters aims to create an 'online village', a single meeting place where all women acknowledge each other as a sister and an equal - a safe place where every woman can come to be inspired and to inspire," said Mandy.

Global Sisters works on three levels:

- by offering a [business directory](#) for all micro businesses and social enterprises which are generating incomes for women unable to access mainstream employment in Australia;
- an [online marketplace](#) where individual sellers can set up shop simply and quickly and at no cost; and
- [micro-loans](#) of up to \$1,000 to assist women in setting up or developing their business.

Global Sisters is centred on a 'women helping women' concept that recruits successful businesswomen to act as '[Big Sisters](#)' for the budding entrepreneurs.

So far, a long list of local photographers, writers, designers and 'wise women' business advisors have signed on to provide pro-bono services, offer advice, and use their knowledge and experiences to connect with women in need.

Included among them are Canberra's own digital storyteller [Jennifer Thompson](#), designer [Samorn Sanixay](#), former ACT MLA [Amanda Bresnan](#), photographer and restaurateur [Lorna Sim](#), and communications professional [Jane Speechley](#).

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In addition, over 600 'sisters' and organisations are being supported by Global Sisters already, including: [Jennifer Lowe](#) from Burma, [Pakao Sorn](#), also from Burma, and [Tamara Kadhim](#), originally from Iraq - all of whom are now based in Canberra.

To find out more, visit [www.globalsisters.org](http://www.globalsisters.org).