



# Kimuli Fashionability

Green Business Spotlight

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Glamorous events, exorbitant price tags, unattainable physiques – the fashion industry’s reputation for not being inclusive is well-deserved. Change is being made, but it is neither fast nor broad enough. Fortunately, entrepreneurs like Juliet Namujju are taking the lead and making real, not just cosmetic, changes to the fashion industry.



Kimuli Fashionability, the brainchild of Juliet, empowers people with disabilities through sustainable fashion. “People with disabilities are often excluded from full participation in economic, social and educational activities,” explains Juliet. “I don’t want them to go through societal exclusion because people assume that they are abnormal, slow, less productive and incompetent.”

While Kimuli teaches us about the value of those on the fringes of society, it also teaches us to value everything around us. Conscious that the fashion industry accounts

*“From transforming sugar sacks into hats and reincarnating cement bags as handbags, Kimuli is the champion of upcycling”*

for nearly 10 per cent of global emissions and 20 per cent of wastewater, Juliet and her team are committed to upcycling waste materials – the perfect example of the circular economy in action.

From transforming sugar sacks into hats and reincarnating cement bags as handbags, Kimuli is the champion of upcycling – a message they are keen to spread among Uganda’s environmentally conscious youth. Through their sustainability commitments, the company has employed 120 young people, who have collected 30,000kg of plastic waste, which has helped upcycle 9,000 products.

Kimuli’s business model is emblematic of a growing crop of sustainable Ugandan enterprises. The country is home to highly creative and ingenious businesses,

but there are no resources to back them. It is exactly such high-potential companies that the Uganda Green Enterprise Finance Accelerator (UGEFA) wants to help.

Financial institutions are out of step with the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises across the country, failing to understand their operations or grasp their environmental impact. Through a six-month finance-focused accelerator programme, UGEFA is bridging the divide and building up an economy that is more respectful of the people it serves and the resources it uses.

Emerging from the accelerator, Kimuli will be better placed to meet the demands of banks, making it easier for it to apply for the funding needed to grow. Supporting such environmentally friendly businesses is expected to unlock a further 10 per cent of GDP in Uganda.

Beyond the tangibles, we can find sustainability in the way we approach business – providing opportunities for the neglected and finding use in the discarded. Kimuli Fashionability is a reminder that enterprises can serve the interests of communities as much as their shareholders.

