

DEPARTMENT OF commerce

ComicCon/Earth Day
Costume Idea—Captain
Planet, Swamp Thing,
Animal Man, Green
Lantern, Aquaman. Heh,
just joshing on the last
one. Fuck Aquaman.



GO | Celebrate Earth Day by breaking a *goddamn* world record, joining The Nature Conservancy in their attempt to host the largest global picnic with Picnic for the Planet at the Boston Common's Frog Pond. [Sun 4.22.12 Boston Common Frog Pond. 11am-5pm/free. @nature_org. bostonfrogpond.com]



BUY | Emphasizing the "friendly" part of "environmentally friendly," each and every item from Good Vibe's Ecorotic Sex Toy Collection has been tested thoroughly (very, very thoroughly) for sustainability and green-itude—so you can get your freak on in good conscience. [@GoodVibesToys. ecorotic.com]

BY KALEY SWEENEY | @KALEYSWEENEY



AJIRI TEAS SARA HOLBY NOT (JUST) FOR PROFIT

"I DIDN'T EVEN REALLY LIKE TEA," says Ajiri Tea's 25-year-old founder Sara Holby, who now owns and operates a tea company with a reach of over 400 stores in three countries. Despite never previously envisioning herself in the world of business, Sara Holby is a prototype of social entrepreneurs.

Ajiri, which means "to employ" in Swahili, was established in 2009 with a single goal in mind: create jobs for Kenyan women. Now only three years later, Ajiri employs 63 women and uses the profits to send 19 orphans to school.

Ajiri is socially conscious business at its finest—tea is purchased from local, small-scale farmers, and its packaging is handmade by five women's groups to reflect the Kenyan landscape. Even the boxes themselves are environmentally sustainable, personally designed and crafted from recycled office paper, banana leaves, and harvested water hyacinth—an intrusive plant in Lake Victoria.

Holby stresses her goal of creating a cycle of employment through the company. "The women are there, the tea comes from Kenya, we sell it here, but then the profits go back for them to do it again."

Farmers and women are given an income with each box of tea purchased, and all the resulting profits are reinvested into Holby's Ajiri Foundation. All community members who are a part of Ajiri Tea are then able to select the orphans they wish to send to school

with the proceeds. "It makes the women and everyone more invested in the project."

A bit of the funds are also reinvested in a communal fund for which the community can vote on their use. Most of the 63 women have spent their new incomes in their children's education, larger farming plots, and other projects to support their families and communities and have gained greater communal respect in the process.

Not only does it help stimulate the local economy in western Kenya, it's the embodiment of Holby's three years of hard work to turn her vision into a reality. While it's her full time gig, she has yet to take a profit from Ajiri Tea herself, but still plans on making this project her life's pursuit.



"It's just me and my mom, really," Holby says. But the Kenyan side of Ajiri's operation is thanks to Sara's good local friend, Nick. "All this wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for Nick."

Despite some initial challenges in getting the company up and running, Ajiri Tea has been awarded some of the tea world's highest honors, and it only continues to grow and complete a self-sustaining cycle of employment and development.

Oh, and just so we don't forget ...

"It's good tea. Good tea for a good cause. Actually, scratch that—it's *great* tea for a *great* cause."

Ajiri Tea can be found at Cardullo's in Harvard Square, South End Formaggio, and Cambridge Naturals in Porter Square, or online for \$9 a box or \$10 for loose tea. ☒



[Ajiri Tea. @AjiriTea. ajiritea.com]