

MISSION POSSIBLE

After meeting on the school run, two Sydney mothers established a social enterprise that has been changing lives in both Australia and India.

WORDS BY ROSAMUND BURTON

Kim Pearce was walking her four children to school when she met mother-of-three Kath Davis. A month later they met for a cup of tea, and Pearce invited Davis to join her in India to do some work with I-India, a not-for-profit organisation that improves the lives of street children from the slums of Jaipur, and nearby poverty-stricken village communities.

It was in India they recognised their shared intention to do something of purpose and started The Possibility Project. Working under the guidance of I-India,

their first venture was to help construct a community hall. Tapping into existing skills – Pearce was a high-school economics teacher for 20 years, and Davis trained as a milliner and worked in television, fashion retail, and styling and design – they created “a slow clothing label” called slumwear108.

“We realised that using some of the gifts that we had, we could help to grow the vocational skills and training for many of the young people, who were former slum kids,” recounts Davis. The pair source old saris, mainly silk, which are made into garments, then sold through their website or pop-up stores.

In 2015 they established Sparrow Sanitation, a biodegradable sanitary pad enterprise. “Sparrow Sanitation makes enough pads for all the women and girls in I-India’s community, and we are hoping to increase production, so that in the future women can sell these pads into the greater

community,” says Davis. “We’re just being of service, of purpose, using our gifts and skills to do what we want to do. It’s not about helping Indians, it’s about helping shift mindsets so that we can all recognise our greater purpose and our greater selves,” explains Pearce.

“We wish to create conditions whereby individuals and small groups believe in their own power to transform their problems,” she says.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

With a background in economics, Pearce was familiar with the concept of scarcity and limited resources, but during her years as a teacher she has always asked students how a problem can be solved differently. “We never put a value to our imaginative capacity and our creative spirit, and when I was

looking at my high-school students I realised that was the most valuable part of them.”

In India, where people with whom they are working have no money or possessions, they saw that this creative force was being used so constructively.

In the talks the pair give in Australia, they discuss four attitudes, which they have used to tap into their own creativity.

The first is compassion, which Pearce describes as “embracing your fears and being prepared to fail”. The second is

abundance: “You’ve already got what you need to create what you want.”

The third is mastery, which is understanding each and every

one of us has a gift. “The fourth attitude is purpose; putting your gift out into the world and creating win-win scenarios, so rather than competing with one another, we elevate each other,” explains Pearce.

Other aspects of The Possibility Project include their meditation classes. “You can’t create what we have created without a stillness,” says Davis. They also have the Australian rights for the film *Landfill Harmonic*, about a Paraguayan group that plays instruments made out of garbage, which they screen to help fund their projects. The next screening is at Sydney’s City Recital Hall in September.

Davis and Pearce don’t consider issues as first or third world; they see that societies have “habituated” a belief that solutions to their problems lie outside of the self. “We are creating simple solutions to serious problems, using what we already have and using our creative spirit,” says Pearce. thepossibilityproject.com.au

“... we can all recognise our greater purpose ...”



HELPING HAND

Left to right: Davis and Pearce with Santosh and her baby boy, and I-India co-founder Abha Goswami. Santosh made The Possibility Project’s first set of silk beads. Inset: Pearce and Davis.

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