



Press Release
June 3, 2015

Kering Foundation Announces Starfish Project as 2015 Social Entrepreneur Award Winner for China

The Kering Corporate Foundation, which combats violence against women, today named Starfish Project, a social enterprise dedicated to restoring hope to exploited women, the winner of the Foundation's 2015 Social Entrepreneur Award in China, in recognition of the Project's contribution to the cause of disadvantaged women in the country. Marie-Claire Daveu, *Chief Sustainability Officer and Head of International Institutional Affairs of Kering*, Feng Yuan, *Kering Foundation Board Member and Social Entrepreneur Award Jury Member*, Jenny McGee, *Starfish Project Chief Executive Officer*, and Aileen Wu, *Starfish Project Senior Director of HR & Programs*, attended the Awards Ceremony in Beijing, China, celebrating the Foundation's latest strides toward furthering women's rights in Asia.

Established in 2009, in line with the Kering Foundation's mission and vision, the Foundation's biennial Awards support social entrepreneurs committed to women's empowerment. Starfish Project, this year's China winner, is a socially-responsible jewelry business owned and operated by women that designs and manufactures jewelry. Proceeds of all sales go to providing women in need with a range of holistic care services, including counseling, vocational training, language acquisition, family education grants, health care access, and housing in its women's shelter. Since 2006, the Project has been able to empower more than 100 women, through their regional and global programs.

At the Ceremony, Ms. Daveu said, *"The Kering Foundation is proud to support Starfish Project and its founder Jenny McGee. We are also thrilled to help reinforce the sustainability and impact of this project, benefiting exploited women. I believe the mentoring provided through the Award represents a special opportunity for both Kering employees and Starfish to share important skills and knowledge."*

"During our April 15 session in Beijing, where the finalists met with the Jury, we were convinced by Starfish Project's strong commitment to women's empowerment with a holistic support approach, ranging from their immediate interests to their independence and autonomy," added jury panelist Ms. Feng.

The support of the Kering Foundation will increase the real social impact of Starfish Project in China. Thanks to the Social Entrepreneur Awards, Starfish Project will benefit from a grant of €30,000 and mentoring by a Kering Group senior manager for two years, enabling the project to further penetrate the China market, offer women advanced leadership training, in order to increase sales as well as women's employment.



“We are honored to be recognized by such an impressive organization as Kering Foundation”, said Jenny McGee, founder of Starfish Project. “ Support like this helps Starfish Project expand our operations and build sales so that we can in turn empower even more women in need around the world.”

This year, with the support of the Foundation for Youth Social Entrepreneurship (FYSE) in China, the Kering Foundation screened several projects, launched three due diligences and after complementary interviews, ultimately selected two finalists: Starfish Project and AME. Founded in 2010, AME produces jewelry, clothing, and accessories inspired by traditional Miao and Dong ethnic handicrafts, to empower women in impoverished, rural areas of Guizhou Province, China. Impressed by the quality of AME products and the professionalism of its team, the Kering Foundation decided to look into potential mentoring and collaboration.

With the selection of Starfish Project, the 2015 edition of the Kering Foundation’s Awards has once again succeeded in empowering social entrepreneurs to realize their vision of a brighter future for underprivileged women, paving the way for further progress ahead. The Social Entrepreneur Awards continually draw from a strong pool of highly-competitive, visionary, and talented candidates. Since 2009, the Awards have supported six social entrepreneurs around the world. In addition to selecting China finalists this year, the Kering Foundation will also award American and European projects at a June ceremony in the United States.

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About the Kering Foundation

Launched in 2009, and chaired by Kering Group Chairman and CEO François-Henri Pinault, the Kering Corporate Foundation combats Violence against Women. It supports NGOs and social entrepreneurs, helps raise awareness on violence against women and encourages employee involvement in the Americas, Western Europe and Asia. More than 140,000 women benefited from the Foundation's support since its inception. For more information: www.keringfoundation.org @KeringForWomen

About the Starfish Project

Starfish Project is a socially responsible jewelry business supporting women with alternative employment and a range of holistic care services. Starfish Project provides opportunities for women to heal and grow through counseling, vocational training, language acquisition, family education grants and health care access, as well as housing in a women's shelter. The Project now operates and offers employment and care to women in three different cities in Asia. Starfish Project is committed to restoring hope for each woman who enters its doors.

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