

American fashion designer, **Rachel Roy's** charity, Kindness Is Always Fashionable recently associated with Piece & Co, a marketplace that connects brands with artisans in the developing world. Last year, the charity had tied-up with FEED, a non-profit organisation launched by model and activist Lauren Bush Lauren, to benefit the United Nations World Food Programme's School Feeding initiative. Roy designed limited-edition FEED 100 India Bags for the project, which sold out, raising awareness and funds to help fight hunger in India.

Roy, who has a Dutch mother and an Indian father, grew up in California and majored in liberal arts, before moving to New York to work as a stylist. She then joined urban fashion line Rocawear, where she rose to the position of creative director for its women and children lines. In 2005, she launched her eponymous fashion label and her clients include Michele Obama, Sharon Stone and Tyra Banks. **Sanjana Chauhan**, Founder of LuxuryNext.com, speaks to Roy about her charitable initiatives.



is a social business with a mission to 'Create Good Products That Help FEED the World.' By working together, Lauren and I hoped to empower people, take part in alleviating hunger in India and to inform consumers that even small actions, including their purchases, can make a difference.

I partnered with FEED on this limited-edition FEED 100 India tote bag to help fight child hunger in India. For every bag sold, 100 school meals were provided to children in India.

How does a label like yours benefit from tying up with initiatives like these?

I am very blessed to lead the life I do. I design to inspire women. By collaborating with charity groups, I hope to encourage charity in all forms. In addition, I truly believe that with charity, you gain clarity, peace and happiness of balance in your life.

Sustainable employment is a game-changer, not only for the artisans employed through the production of this collaboration

A Charitable Piece

What inspired you to set up your label?

I grew up immersed in issues of Vogue magazine. I collected and saved almost every issue. I didn't realise that Vogue allowed me to dream as a child. After graduating from college, I moved to New York City, ultimately launching my first collection in the spring of 2004. My first collection embodied an effortless and elegant lifestyle with print and pattern blending, pairing of opposites and defining details, all inspired by strong and sexy women. Now, almost 10 years later, I still design for these confident women.

What inspires you?

I am inspired by life, art, colours, emotions, past experiences and the future — my environment and everything around me inspires me daily. Infusing the inspirations I gain from my surroundings, I ultimately design to help women feel like smart and confident individuals.

Can you tell us about the Piece & Co. Project?

I have made it my mission to help bring a voice to women and children in need. Currently my Kindness Is Always Fashionable travel collection with Piece & Co. creates employment for artisans in developing areas. Employment is empowerment and it is important for me to partner with organisations that will provide sustainable employment to help women in challenging situations around the globe.

Can you share details about the FEED 100 India tote bag that you designed?

The collaboration was a result of our mutual desire to help those in need. Kindness Is Always Fashionable strives to create sustainable employment opportunities for women in the hope of bettering themselves and their families. FEED

but for their families and their communities. Through collaborations like these, artisans are working toward financial independence and being self-sufficient.

In what way has India influenced you?

My father is from India and the country holds a special place in my heart. I was excited to collaborate with Lauren to create a product that will impact the children of India in such a significant way.

I recently travelled to the country. I hadn't visited it in the past 20 years and it was such an amazing experience as I took my oldest daughter, Ava, with me. What made it even more special was the opportunity to meet artisans, who handcrafted the bag for the FEED Projects. Seeing the beauty and all that India has to offer through her eyes was a memorable moment that I will never forget. The beauty and culture of the land inspired my designs. •



Luxury design collaborations with charities help artisans work towards financial independence