

## Pick n Pay Clothing partners with Sari for Change

Pick n Pay Clothing has partnered with Sari for Change, a foundation dedicated to empowering unemployed women and promoting sustainability by upcycling gently worn saris into stunning new one-of-a-kind dresses.



Founder of Sari for Change, Rayana Edwards. Image supplied

Together, they have unveiled a limited and exclusive range of versatile wrap dresses which can be worn in three distinct ways. The dresses are available in a kaleidoscope of beautiful colours, ensuring there's something to complement every style preference.

Each dress is one-of-a-kind and embodies a story of renewal and uniqueness, as it is crafted from a single donated sari carrying its individual heritage. With only 200 dresses available, these exclusive pieces went on sale at four Pick n Pay Clothing stores: Cavendish, Canal Walk, Sandton City, and Gateway. Through the partnership, customers can buy one of these exclusive dresses for R369,99, which usually retails for over R1,000.

The founder of Sari for Change, Rayana Edwards, started the project in 2014 after identifying a huge untapped sari resource in her community and the need for upskilling unemployed women to self-sufficiency. At the time, Rayana was a single mother raising four daughters herself.

“Every Indian grandmother has a collection of saris stored in their back cupboards, with the hope of passing them on to the next generation. Each sari is often only worn once for a special occasion, so this presented a resource of six meters of beautiful fabric to innovate,” explains Edwards.

Sari for Change has provided skills and employment to women, mostly from Soweto, with training hubs in Cosmo City, Dobsonville, and Yeoville.

Since its inception, over 15,000 unwanted and gently worn saris have been collected from community-based organisations and repurposed into various garments, including jackets, kaftans and kimonos, sold via their online shop.

For this collaboration with Pick n Pay, Sari For Change has designed modest wrap dresses ahead of the various religious celebrations overlapping this year,” says Edwards.

Speaking on the partnership, Edwards shares, “We need to educate consumers about production processes that are kinder to the environment and understand the back story around the impact of their production. This is a big step in the right direction for a big retailer, demonstrating their commitment to empowering community organisations that focus on upskilling and developing women. Every woman and indigent person employed in the program has their own hard story, and Sari for Change is bringing much-needed skills and development directly to them.”

Edwards continues, “This is a major retail breakthrough, considering this project started in our garage. Mercy, the leader of the Cosmo City hub where the Pick n Pay range was produced, started as a cleaner in the clothing factory,” she says.

“As this partnership required scale, it necessitated the shift from domestic to industrial machines. The two new industrial machines mean our women are now focused on efficiency and output. Two additional seamstresses who attended the 2023 upskilling programme are now full-time employed. Mercy and her team have been coached and mentored on pattern-making and grading to meet Pick n Pay requirements and were trained by our in-house expert.”

Hazel Pillay, Managing Executive of Pick n Pay Clothing, emphasises the importance of supporting local talent through collaborations like this. “This particular range for customers offers a truly unique one-of-a-kind wrap dress at an everyday affordable price for our customers. What makes it even more special is that the dresses are made by upskilled women within the community.

“This partnership exemplifies the spirit of sustainable fashion but also underscores the transformative power of collaboration. We remain committed to championing local suppliers and designers through initiatives like this and our Futurewear collaborations, enriching the retail landscape with diversity and purpose,” concludes Pillay.