

## COOKIES WITH A CAUSE



RETAIL

As its tagline says, a small South African manufacturer of upmarket cookies and brownies is “creating opportunity, one bite at a time.” Khayelitsha is one of South Africa’s largest townships, located on the outskirts of Capetown. Its inhabitants are locked in a constant struggle against poverty, unemployment and violence. Two years ago, Alicia Polak, a former investment banker, founded [The Khayelitsha Cookie Company \(KCC\)](#). Ms Polak wanted to offer more than monetary aid, and decided to help the township’s women build a sustainable living. She chose cookies because they’re a simple product, and baking is a skill that’s easy to teach. KCC now employs 11 women who were formerly unemployed. Since joining KCC, they’ve been trained in baking, packing, labelling and customer service. To ensure the company’s longevity, great emphasis is placed on quality and production standards. The brand’s upscale cookies and brownies are sold to South African hotels, restaurants and coffee houses. The Khayelitsha Cookie Company expects to break even soon, and Ms Polak hopes to make her employees part-owners in the business. Great example of using entrepreneurial skills to help alleviate poverty and unemployment in a sustainable manner, and one that would work well in many parts of the world. Ms Polak is actually considering bringing the cookie concept to disadvantaged parts of the United States. Care to lend her a hand?

25th July 2006

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