



## brown girl surf Starfish Philosophy

The design of brown girl surf emerged from Founder Farhana Huq's 15+ years of professional experience as a social entrepreneur, artist, activist, educator, and surfer. Having weathered a devastating experience of closing a nonprofit she founded and ran for 12 years due to an economic downturn, Farhana was inspired to design a different model for social change that centered ideas of creativity, spaciousness and resiliency at its core.

Believing that sustainable change is created by healthy ecosystems that embrace diverse perspectives, hybrid models of thinking, cross-sector collaborations and strategic foresight, Farhana was inspired, in part, by the [starfish movement model](#), a way of working as defined in the book "[The Starfish and the Spider: the Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations.](#)"

Farhana learned of the model from friend, ocean scientist, and Blue Mind Movement Founder, [Wallace J. Nichols](#), and his network of futurist thinkers spanning the disciplines of neuroscience, art, ocean activism and science. As starfish have decentralized neural structures, they are resilient if broken, allowing them to regenerate into new starfish. Thus, they can never die. For this reason, brown girl surf was structured as a broad platform accelerating a mosaic of collaborative projects working towards social change, and not defined by any one thing it did.

A few defining features of the starfish model include purposeful lack of structure, ambiguity, and a movement away from traditional titles and strict rules. Rather, starfish models are driven by a catalyst that champions and connects ideas, projects, and people together in service to making change. This is the reason, for example, brown girl surf never operated with traditional titles for several years into its inception. It is also the reason it emphasized its name as the binding philosophy connecting various affiliated prongs of its starfish design.