

PRIVILEGE OBLIGES

"I have never understood why some people are lucky enough to be born with the chance that I had, and why across the world, there is a woman just like me, with the same abilities and the same desires, the same work ethic and love for her family, who would most likely make better films and better speeches. Only she sits in a refugee camp, and she has no voice. She worries about what her children will eat, how to keep them safe, and if they will ever be allowed to return home. I don't know why this is my life, and that's hers".

- Angelina Jolie.

"I guess that's what actors can... voicing our innermost feelings. And in her words, she expresses the core reason why I chose to become a Soroptimist. To help giving a chance to those with no voice, born with no privilege or who struggle to survive, many times for reasons they never created themselves. I remember when I heard this speech. It really moved me. Instead of a refugee camp, she could be a cotton field worker. Or a seamstress in a garment factory. In many ways, her situation is similar, the main difference is geography".

- Lena Trend.

Trapped in a social prison

Lena Trend is the owner of the Danish fashion company COZE AARHUS. Her job is to make and sell clothes for women through their brands LauRie and ECHTE - the textile industry is her everyday work field. An industry where about 80% of the factory workers are women and where textile factory workers are generally among the lowest paid, as garment production is linear and therefore requires no profession.

Lena explains why good working conditions, especially in the textile industry, are so important to her: "We all know that clothes can be bought at prices cheaper than that of a sandwich, despite the fact that at least 100 hands have touched each item, before it is finished. Working hours are typically very long and mostly take place in patriarchal countries, where household chores and care for the young and old are done by women, leaving them with no hours left for their own personal and professional development. Consequently, many women are trapped in social prisons, and many have no dreams left on their own behalf, except that their children will get better life opportunities than themselves."

Women supporting women

For this reason, among others, all LauRie and ECHTE garments are made in Europe. Early on Lena and her team decided that their productions should be transported over shorter distances, and that they wanted to be close to the factories, who make their products. In this way they can better understand and follow up on the working conditions and certifications on which they have promised themselves never to compromise. "The bonus is faster deliveries to our customers due to short distance, but we live with that", Lena adds smilingly.

They meet skilled, hard working women in their daily work life. The best factory partner in Turkey for instance, and the biggest one, with the highest score in social audits, is run by 3 sisters. This factory makes many of their trousers, and work on their sustainable development together with Coze Aarhus, something which they have been doing for 15 years now. "They are educated and empowered to make changes in our industry - and I think they show by good example that of course a business can work with a sustainable focus and social responsibility - and at the same time be profitable", Lena adds.

No harmful chemicals

COZE AARHUS continuously works on making better environmental choices in their materials. Next year their goal is that all cotton used for their clothes will be organic cotton - and right now it is more than 80%. They want to minimize the chemical health risk for the cotton field workers and for the soil in which it is grown.

And their viscose (which is made of wood) will all come from replanted forestry. "Because trees are essential for our climate - and with a 97% ratio, we are very close now", Lena says. "LauRie and ECHTE garments are tested free of harmful industrial chemicals. We believe it is our obligation to ensure that our products cause no harm to our users. And we know that a huge amount of chemicals are used in making textiles. Therefore, all our products are tested by Oeko-Tex standard 100 - a third party global certification, just to make sure and to show that what we say is also what we do".

Without any doubt Lena could go on about all the sustainability projects they work on, and you really feel her dedication. If you are curious for more, she recommends that you check their websites, laurie.dk or echte.dk or read their new sustainability report published in June 2021, which you can find [HERE](#).

It's a win-win-win

Lena has chosen to use her voice right now to reach out to you in celebration of 100 years of voicing globally for women and girls. By getting new clothes for yourself, her company will donate to the President's Appeal "Road to Equality" - and to a specific project of Education and Empowerment which in SI Club of Kisumu next year, through Soroptimist Club Aarhus, where she has been a proud member for about 10 years now. The company donates 13 EUR per order - quite much, but so is a 100-year celebration. It is a triple win. You get new clothes, LauRie or ECHTE get new happy users and women and girls in need get a Soroptimistic helping hand. "I hope you and maybe your sister, mother, daughter, spouse, neighbour, friend, aunt, work colleague or someone else you know will join in and get new wardrobe favourites and at the same time help other women and girls of need through our SI 100-year celebration donation".



Lena Trend, the owner of the textile company, Coze Aarhus, has decided to celebrate the SI100 celebration in a special way. The company donates 13 Euros per order you will make on laurie.dk or echte.dk to Soroptimist projects on "The Road to Equality".