
CLEAN & UNIQUE

*Small sized fashion labels and fashion designers
for a social and environmental responsible fashion production*

Conclusions of Meeting 7-2-2008 (p.1)

Agenda:

- 10.00 How to make Fair Wear?
By Ivo Spauwen, Fair Wear Foundation
- 10.30 Can we do it together?
By Niels Oskam, Clean & Unique Association
- 11.20 Case 1: People at Ethical Classics
By Joanneke Kruijssen, owner
- 11.40 Studio Jux: Small productions in Nepal
By Saskia Boekraad & Jitske Lundgren
- 12.00 Interact! Questions, answers, conclusions.

Ivo Spauwen, Fair Wear Foundation

OBJECTIVE: improve labor conditions in the global garment industry: No forced labor • No discrimination • no child labor • Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining • Payment of a Living Wage • No excessive overtime • A safe and healthy working environment • A legal labor contract.

Strong points of FWF:

- It is a multi stakeholder initiative (MSI): NGO's like Oxfam and trade unions like FNV are taking part and make the initiative 'independent' from business.
- It is an worldwide network of businesses, unions and NGO's, so sensitive and flexible to local situations.
- Process driven: not a social label/ certification

New members of FWF (check 'handleiding deelnemende bedrijven', library of www.fairwear.nl):

- Sign FWF Code of Labour Practices
- Inform suppliers on intentions and actions
- Monitoring (possibly with FWF audit teams)
- Remedation (Corrective Action)
- Frequent reporting on progress to FWF
- Communication on membership
- Transparency on efforts and results

Commitment: a matter of attitude!

Barriers for small fashion companies:

- Entry fee of >>€2600,- and additional costs
- FWF procedures are suitable for fashion produced in large to medium sized factories, not for small factories/ cooperatives/ village communities etc.
- Small fashion companies have limited production share => limited influence at factories

Niels Oskam, Clean & Unique Association

Just launched, the association is a self-supporting initiative, for serious candidates only! Possible advantages:

- Collective memberships (e.g. Fair Wear Foundation, but also others like trade association Modint, fashion media)
- Collective purchasing (e.g. of fabrics)
- Shared production network (confidential)

Collective Fair Wear Foundation membership: Why?

- To make a statement pro Fair Wear (also when producing in low risk areas)
- To have a reference: To follow a method and to give proof of bringing Fair Wear on the market
- Work together to overcome the practical barriers

The targets for FWF members:

- 40% monitored in the 1st year
- 60% monitored in the 2nd year
- 90% monitored in the 3rd year

How can individual members help to achieve this?

- 'Private label' orders at regular FWF members
- Buy basics at wholesaler, member of FWF
- Place production in 'low risk area's' like Western Europe.
- Place production at factory in high risk area's: take care of the monitoring (Though!)

Is C&U Association also for eco fabrics?

Probably a next step. The association is a self supporting initiative, and the members can decide on collective criteria for eco fabrics use and other environmental aspects.

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Case 1: Ethical Classics

By Joanneke Kruijssen (owner)

Since: September 2007

Style: good quality, classical, conscious

Products: man and women blouses, tops, shawls

Materials: organic cotton, organic wool, hemp, nettle.

Price level: middle to high

Selling points: Ethical Classics web shop

Production: most in Western Europe, especially social workplaces in Scotland. There, physically or mentally disabled people make the products. The occupational level of the producers is a starting point for the design and the type of product being produced.

Questions from the participants were about production risks like failures and delays, further seasons and financial margins.

Joanneke has her master degree in Industrial Design and has no working experience in the conventional clothing sector, where seasons, production risks and margins are critical factors. Because Ethical Classics sells only through the own web shop, Joanneke can be flexible on these points and maintain lower margins than is usual in the sector.

Note: the 3rd Clean & Unique meeting is on 4 September 2008 and the theme is 'profit'. This day will be about the economics of making 'green' fashion, throughout the production chain and certainly about the profitability of the various business concepts.

Conclusions

The meeting was concluded with spreading the application form of the Clean&Unique Association. If you are interested or need more information, please mail to cleanunique@hetisgroenenhet.nl. Next meeting is on theme 'Planet', 10th April 2008. Let's keep in touch through the online community!

Note

Time was too short to inform those companies working with small factories, producer cooperations, village communities etc. For the C&U Association we are studying the possibilities to join the Fair Trade movement and their procedures for this target group.



Case 2: Studio Jux

By Saskia Boekraad & Jitske Lundgren (owners)

Since: end 2006

Style: young fashion designer label for women

Products: women tops, pants etc.

Materials: mostly naturals like bamboo

Price level: middle to high

Selling points: retail through selling agency

Production: In a small factory in Katmandu, Nepal.

The factory is as young as Studio Jux, so, also still in a developmental stage. Jitske spends 5 months a year at the Nepal factory, to train the workers and assure quality.

The working conditions in the factory are unusual fair for Nepalese terms, as one of the owners (a French) knows the European standards and feels responsible to work in a social acceptable way.

Although Jux is not the biggest client of the Nepal Factory, their relation is tight as they work together from the beginning. Now both the factory and Jux need to further professionalize, meaning that Jitske cannot continue her 5 months a year of voluntary 'development aid'. As an alternative, Jux has found a solution in PUM. This organization sends retired experts to developing countries. PUM has found a textile expert willing to further train the people in the factory.

A further step to professionalize would also be, to audit/ evaluate the current labor conditions according to a set standard, and to make improvements where needed.