



Not every children's fashion label can claim the Dalai Lama amongst its fans, but Eternal Creation can. Founder Frances Carrington's commitment to fair trade brings you beautiful, impeccably tailored garments from a thriving community in the foothills of the Himalayas.



power cuts, and phone and internet outages. As a result, we have kept our old-fashioned treadle machines and our office staff are very good at rolling ribbons and folding fabric! The other huge challenge is the extreme weather in the Himalayas (Dharamsala is in the foothills). We have the second highest rainfall in India, and it literally doesn't stop raining from the end of June till the beginning of September, so keeping everything dry is a nightmare!

What is unique about your business?

We employ both Tibetans and Indians, so we have a mixture of Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim employees. This is a first for the local community and has helped promote a lot of friendship and harmony between the groups, which was one of my original objectives (there are ongoing racial issues in India). We have also specifically employed and trained men and women from disadvantaged groups – refugees, ex-political prisoners, disabled people and women who have divorced their husbands (usually considered outcasts in India). It's a joy to see them grow into their new positions, and the amazing pride and care that they take in their work and their workplace.

There is also a crèche at the workshop, which is perfect for the mothers (and fathers!), as they can visit their babies as often as they like, and can therefore continue to breast feed for much longer than other working mothers. I also think the crèche works as a great 'mothers' group', and is a wonderful support network for new mothers.

What is your business motto/philosophy?

Fair Trade! It's so important to me, and it's something that I will always continue to support and promote.

What plans do you have for 2011/12?

I have expanded the women's fashion and sleepwear ranges, and am also working on a bedding and homewares range for babies and children. We are planning an online sewing club, and I eventually want to have tailoring tutorials at the workshop in Dharamsala....for intrepid tailors-to-be!

What inspired your business?

I worked as a volunteer with Australian Volunteers Abroad at Norbulingka Institute in Dharamsala. This involved setting up a tailoring centre and teaching newly arrived Tibetan refugees pattern-making and tailoring. It was a wonderful and humbling experience; I was doing something useful with my skills and learning amazing new things every day.

I was lucky enough to meet the Dalai Lama while I was there, and he thanked me for my work with Tibetans. From that moment on, I knew I would never work in a normal fashion job again, and I planned to start my own project.

How long have you been in business?

I started Eternal Creation in 1999 with my meagre savings and a \$5000 loan from my father.

What are the biggest challenges?

Originally the language and cultural differences were hugely challenging, but now I would say the greatest challenge is the infrastructure in Dharamsala, where our tailoring workshop is located. We have regular



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