



---

# THE FABRIC SOCIAL

---

## Introduction



---

**Location:** Based in Australia,  
Fabric sourced from  
Northeast India

---

**Industry:** Fashion & Textiles

---

**Founded in** 2014

---

**Image credit to** The Fabric  
Social

---

The Fabric Social is an “ethnic fashion social enterprise” that designs and sells fashion products. It was founded by Fiona McAlpine, Sharna de Lacy, and Katie Rose, who are from Australia. The Fabric Social works with conflict-affected women in India, to end their economic isolation through including them in the supply chain of the business. The communities The Fabric Social works in have suffered from decades of armed violence. The women in these communities provide the materials, such as silk and cotton, producing fabric for the fashion lines of The Fabric Social. These clothing are then sold to the international market, primarily to Australia.

## Highlights

- The Fabric Social was one of the finalists in Project Inspire 2015
- The Fabric Social has raised about \$20,000 through crowdfunding

## Social Problem

The communities living in the conflict zones of Northeast India are affected by economic isolation, according to co-founder McAlpine. Due to the sensitive political context, large non-government organisations are unwilling or unable to extend assistance to community in these areas. Similarly, multilateral organisations often miss out on improving these areas due to various constraints. This means that without economic opportunities, these communities often stay poor. And poverty can in turn disrupt the peace and stability within these communities.

## Social Intervention and Impact Created

The Fabric Social aims to lift the burden of poverty from women and their families in conflict and post conflict areas. It does so by helping the women to become more economically independent, and therefore more able to participate freely in political life and represent their interests in the community.

The first two villages The Fabric Social worked with were fabric producers, many of whom had been active members in the armed insurgency over the past 20 years, but now live in a demilitarization camp.

The pilot project in Assam, India, works with female silk weavers living in a former rebel village, Lakwa. From cultivating the silks right through to hand looming the fabric, The Fabric Social supports producers to maintain traditional practices that are environmentally sustainable and support the livelihoods of entire communities. The company generates income and opportunity by selling clothing to the international market. A share of the profits is then invested back into supporting grassroots initiatives that place women at the table and give them an equal voice.

In addition, The Fabric Social develop the business literacy of their weavers through a smartphone app that tracks income, quality control and production.

## Business Model

The Fabric Social's supply chain begins with the designs, which then requires the raw inputs from the partnering farms, such as the Eri-silk or the Khadi-cotton. These inputs are hand-spun using traditional techniques. Weavers then produce the fabric, and they have the flexibility to set their own prices and work hours, and they work in collective work-spaces in co-op style groups.



Image credit to The Fabric Social

---

The Fabric Social works with Sasha, a WFTO accredited organisation to cut, dye, and sew the final piece. The pieces are made to order and shipped directly to customers. The profits from the sales of these pieces are then used to grow the project and reinvest in the communities.

In its 2014-2015 annual report, The Fabric Social reports a funding of \$9,000 AUD from crowdfunding and a prize money of \$9,000 AUD from PayPal Australia People Rule Competition. There are also some amounts collected from monthly donations and other events.

The company works with Srishti Handlooms Limited NGO (India), and the partnership focuses on rural development through a weaver centered programme.

## Social Impact

According to the annual reports, The Fabric Social achieved in 2014-2015:

- 100% supply chain transparency obtained with 100% of products made in India
- Established overseas presence, 47% of sales international and 63% in Australia
- 20 weavers employed for production
- 20 donated solar lamps distributed to women's camp
- \$5000 in online sales in 30 days of TFS' limited item launch

## Current Marketing Efforts

### Online presence and social media

- E-commerce site: The company website is also an e-store, which models the products, accept online payments, and ships worldwide.
- Pozible (Completed crowdfunding): Raised AUD\$18,136 <http://www.pozible.com/project/178887>
- Facebook: 4168 likes
- Instagram (@thefabricsocial): 1,211 followers and 2104 likes with daily posts
- Twitter (@thefabricsocial): 1,340 followers
- Youtube: A few videos about the company can be found online, but there is not much following

## Challenges Faced and Project Scope

As TFS grows, TFS will be looking to increase demand, and therefore the number of producer and villages supported. There is huge potential to grow the operations within Assam, and to replicate the effective model with other producer groups.

Fabric Social would students to design a campaign for its winter collection, which include:

- Campaign slogans, and campaign banner shots with slogans and the company logo
- A content plan for rolling out the strategy using 1x blog post, 5x Facebook posts and 10x tweets. These can include quotes memes, whatever creative they like.
- Needs to be on theme with the branding: ethical fashion from India, but modern minimalist designs).
- Needs to be aimed at our primary market segment: young, urban, Australian, active, early adopters.

- From a visual perspective, needs to align with our branding elements: attitude, uncomplicated, honest, raw, committed, and positive.

## Useful Links and Resources

Company website and online store: <http://thefabricsocial.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/thefabricsocial/>

## Additional references

Video: The Fabric Social: Project Inspire 2015 – YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Aem5-gK5bA>

Redefining Fashion – 2015 Finalist ‘The Fabric Social’

<http://www.projinspire.com/project-inspire-spotlight-the-fabric-social/>

Article from the Business Insider:

[http://www.businessinsider.com.au/after-years-of-volunteer-work-this-entrepreneur-used-social-enterprise-to-start-her-business-and-australians-love-it-2015-6?utm\\_content=bufferc9ac9&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.businessinsider.com.au/after-years-of-volunteer-work-this-entrepreneur-used-social-enterprise-to-start-her-business-and-australians-love-it-2015-6?utm_content=bufferc9ac9&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

An article written by students from Monash University:

<http://mojonews.com.au/a-change-in-the-social-fabric/>

Story of Fabric Social:

<http://www.mamamia.com.au/fabric-social/>

Annual report 2014/15:

[https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0769/4097/files/Annual\\_Report\\_in\\_Brief.pdf?17247261919393948598](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0769/4097/files/Annual_Report_in_Brief.pdf?17247261919393948598)

Corporate social responsibility report:

[https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0769/4097/files/CSR\\_Stakeholders\\_Report\\_2015.pdf?17247261919393948598](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0769/4097/files/CSR_Stakeholders_Report_2015.pdf?17247261919393948598)