



**WOMEN IN
COTTON**

Name – Stephanie Silber

Company name -Otto Stadtlander GmbH

Job title -Managing Director

1. When did you join the cotton industry?

I started my career in the cotton industry in 1999 when I joined Otto Stadtlander GmbH for a trainee program. It was exciting for me to start off in a such a complex industry, being in contact with completely new cultures, confronted with unknown languages and working in such a competitive environment.

2. What do you like the most about the cotton industry?

Diversity: there are stakeholders all around the globe. For instance farmers in Africa, ginner in Greece, spinning mills in India, weaving mills in China, garmenting in Bangladesh or retailers from Europe. It is the daily diversity that enriches this working environment and emphasizes the importance of what we do, cotton connects the world.

3. What is it like being a woman in the cotton industry?

Within Otto Stadtlander GmbH we have a gender balanced team and fill vacancies according to competence. Apart from myself being managing director, we have a female head of quality, finance and several traders.

Outside of our company and country though, the situation of women in the cotton industry is different. Women still suffer from social and economical disadvantages and are stripped of their elemental rights in several countries.

4. What do you think is the biggest challenge for women in the industry?

Despite good steps into a right direction, women are still missing adequate role models in the industry, hence I appreciate and support the ICA Women in Cotton initiative. It elucidates the discrepancies and changes the atmosphere. Yet we all should widen our horizon and focus on urging gender problems in all stages along the supply chain.

5. What is your message to other women in the industry?

Have a positive reflection, a good mentor; trust yourself.

Let me give you an example of positive reflection. Before Corona I attended a formal, traditional dinner in Bremen - 20 people. I was the only woman. After each course a toast was made. It always started: "Ms Silber, Gentlemen....."

My reflection of that evening was not I was the only woman. My positive reflection was: due to the toast at the end of the day all participants know my name!