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# SASIBAI KIMIS

Founder, Earth Heir

"I've always loved beautiful fabrics and textiles, especially when they're buttery smooth and soft!" Sasibai Kimis smiles, when asked about her motivation behind setting up Earth Heir, which specialises in 'ethical elegance' – bringing delicate silk and cashmere pashminas handcrafted by artisans in Cambodia, Sarawak, Indonesia and Kashmir, to consumers in conjunction with its message of social and ecological consciousness.

But of course, when she cemented her decision last year to turn what started off as a hobby of bringing handwoven scarves back to Malaysia for friends into a serious business, there was far more on Sasibai's mind than just aesthetics: "I wanted to fight the injustice towards people who handmake things but do not get rewarded for the work they do, and to create ethical luxury products that will be sustainable enough to support the weavers and the charities that we're linked to, as well as ourselves."

Granted, it's a tall order – 50 percent of Earth Heir's profits are channelled into initiatives to improve the living standards of the scarves' craftspeople, as well as supporting non-profit organisations for the protection of the ecosystem and those affected by human trafficking. However, Sasibai's experiences in diverse fields—armed with degrees from the Wharton School, University of

Pennsylvania and Cambridge University, she's worked with the United Nations Development Program in Ghana, as a Director in the Private Equity team at First Avenue Partners LLP in London, and as a Vice President in the Investments division at Khazanah Nasional – have shown her where to set her sights.

"This has to be fair. I've always wanted to do more for the world than just make lots of money, with a desire to marry my background in finance with my background in development. It's up to me how I pay and check how things are produced, and that our artisans work in a comfortable environment, not a sweatshop. I'm always thinking 'What do the weavers need?'"

Alongside the preservation of the legacy and tradition of handweaving, she hasn't forgotten the eco-conscious side of Earth Heir: in partnership with a Belgian NGO, We Forest, two trees are planted for every scarf sold, while all packaging is biodegradable and recyclable.

Sasibai is dreaming big too – "My hope would be to one day have a group of weavers working for me directly who use specific eco-friendly dyes. We're thinking of tying up with different Malaysian designers, and we might be heading in the direction of Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan and Turkey for more handwoven items." Has there ever been a better reason to accessorise?