



# JUST

## ABOUT PROJECT JUST

Project JUST empowers shoppers with data and storytelling to incite change within the fashion industry. We work to shift demand towards positive practices and ethical brands, ultimately championing the farmer or worker at the bottom of the supply chain.

JUST's online platform, **Project JUST**, is an open catalog and forum of 150+ fashion brands. Each brand is researched and categorized based on social, environmental and aesthetic factors to bring manufacturing practices to light and enable informed purchasing decisions.

As a forum, users—shoppers, industry activists, brands, retailers—are encouraged to join in the discussion, even help to uncover missing pieces of brands' backstories. JUST is rooted in the belief that transparency creates understanding, which inspires real change through the accumulation of small choices we make every day.

Brands on the platform are researched, assessed, profiled, and categorized based on eight vectors:

- Size and Business Model
- Transparency and Traceability
- Social Efforts
- Environmental Efforts
- Innovation
- Intention
- Management Behavior
- Community



## ABOUT THE FOUNDERS

**Natalie Grillon** (left) began her career working with smallholder farmers in East Africa with the Peace Corps before being selected for the Acumen Global Fellows Program. That role took her to Uganda, East Africa, to Gulu Agricultural Development helping smallholder farmers grow organic and fair trade produce, including cotton.

Before JUST, **Shahd AlShehail** (right) founded an all-female luxury fashion house in the Middle East focused on empowering artisans. With Acumen, also as a Global Fellow, she moved to India to work on early childhood education for an education portfolio company.





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## JUST LAUNCHES ONLINE PLATFORM PROJECT JUST 150+ FASHION BRANDS PROFILED FOR SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY

10 December 2015

NEW YORK, NY – JUST tells the stories behind our clothes. It empowers shoppers with data and storytelling to incite change within the fashion industry. Founded by Acumen Global Fellows, Natalie Grillon and Shahd AlShehail, **JUST works to shift shoppers' demand towards positive practices and ethical brands, ultimately championing the farmer or worker at the bottom of the supply chain.**

Today, JUST will launch its online platform, Project JUST, **an open catalog of 150+ fashion brands.** Each brand in the system is researched and categorized based on **social, environmental and aesthetic factors** to bring manufacturing practices to light and enable informed purchasing decisions. As a forum, users—shoppers, industry activists, brands, retailers—are encouraged to join the discussion, even help to uncover missing pieces of brands' backstories.

With a degree from Georgetown and an MBA from Cornell focused on Sustainable Global Enterprise, Grillon began her career working with smallholder farmers in West Africa with the Peace Corps and then assumed position as a sustainability coordinator in local government. AlShehail, with a degree from Evansville and an MBA from Johns Hopkins, founded an all-female owned luxury fashion house in the Middle East focused on empowering artisans. **Both women were selected as part of a group of 10 for the prestigious Acumen Global Fellows Program out of over 1,000 applicants.** Grillon was placed at Gulu Agricultural Development Company helping smallholder farmers grow organic and fair trade produce, including cotton. AlShehail was placed in India working on early childhood education for an education portfolio company.

During a visit to India, Grillon and AlShehail got together to discuss their interactions with the farmers and artisans respectively. The women both noticed (a) the workers' tangible feeling of dignity and justice in their work, (b) that having a sustainable income, one not tied to NGO's products, meant job security and peace of mind in knowing their market wouldn't disappear, and (c) that the skills those farmers/artisans were taught were an investment in the preservation of a well-developed craft that would have died otherwise. **Above all, there was a real sense of pride and happiness, which made them eager to show off their work.**

"One farmer in my group," Grillon recalled, "was able to build his family a permanent house made of bricks with a tin roof (as opposed to grass and mud). **I believed that more and more farmers would be able to lift themselves out of poverty in a dignified way if only the shopper knew the impact their purchase—may it cost a few extra dollars—had on these peoples' lives.**"

Grillon and AlShehail were motivated to tell the beautiful stories behind the clothes we wear everyday, and expose some of the untold stories of poor practices in the industry. Thus, JUST was officially born in February 2015.



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Project JUST's platform technology integrates **available data sourced from supply chains, distills and analyzes the information, and then assesses it by a panel of experts and the online community.** They analyze a brand and distill its supply chain based on eight different vectors: size and business model, transparency and traceability, social efforts, environmental efforts, innovation, intention, management behavior, and community. Research is sourced from:

(a) Self-reported information that comes directly from brands and is publicly accessible: sustainability reports, 10-Ks, company websites, press releases etc.

(b) Third-party information published by industry outlets via investigative reporting, such as Not for Sale, Rank-A-Brand, Good Guide, and a deep dive into press features and other media sources.

This enables their profiles to provide a holistic picture for the shopper about a brands' practices to try to effect the supply chain and eliminate the harm, as well as highlight the good.

Project JUST also functions as a forum for clothing conversation. **It is an open catalog on which users—shoppers, retailers, brands, industry activists, journalists—can comment and share their input to fill in any gaps in brand profiles.** A committee of experts then weighs-in to assess the contribution. It's one way in which JUST incorporates all voices. JUST is rooted in the belief that transparency creates understanding, which inspires real change through the accumulation of small choices we make every day.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION & MEDIA INQUIRIES:**

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