

INDIGENOUS Models Responsible Fashion Supply Chain Ethics, Challenges the Fashion Industry

SANTA ROSA, Calif., May 20 /CSRwire/ - "No one should suffer or die to make clothing. Just the opposite, they and their families should prosper. That's how it is with our supply chain. That's how it can be with others. Let's not make this harder than it is. And let's not wait. Lives are at stake," says Scott Leonard, Co-founder and CEO of INDIGENOUS.

For almost two decades, INDIGENOUS has led the way in fair trade and organic fashion. Its premium value fashion is featured in over 500 boutiques, and many catalogs, and INDIGENOUS produces for Eileen Fisher. Over 1,500 artisan knitters in some of South America's poorest regions participate in the INDIGENOUS supply chain.

"Accidents like the one that happened in Bangladesh simply would not happen in our supply chain. We independently survey workers every six months, require participatory and fair labor practices, personally tour workshops and pay prices that make safety, benefits and fair wages easy to achieve."

"The INDIGENOUS model is readily replicable. While it represents a distinctive competitive advantage, INDIGENOUS is ready to share it to help save lives and promote the well-being of artisans and garment workers everywhere," says Matt Reynolds, Co-founder and president of INDIGENOUS. INDIGENOUS independently collected data shows that 75% of artisans in its supply chain are no longer at risk of poverty. Many are achieving milestones of financial security, even growth as some start their own artisan workshops. Workplaces are safe and provide benefits. A full 85% of workers say they are better off since participating in this supply chain.

The model has three key elements. The first is continuous supply chain monitoring and the promotion of artisan rights and engagement in all aspects of workplace policy and practice. INDIGENOUS uses innovative SMS and voice technology to directly survey workers about their economic, social and workplace well-being. This allows their opinions to be shared privately and confidentially.

The second is transparency. From the provenance of its organically grown fibers to the status of artisans and artisan communities, INDIGENOUS shares information about its supply chain in a way that goes beyond simple, iconic labeling. Video profiles of artisans, artisan workshops, and supply chain source maps are just a few of the tools.

The third is consumer engagement in the value of fair trade and organic fashion. This fall, every INDIGENOUS garment will come with a QR code on the hang tag. The QR code launches INDIGENOUS proprietary Fair Trace Tool™, an application that lets the consumer meet the artisans who made the garment, understand the social impact of purchasing the garment and other facts, delivered in text, video and animated map format.

INDIGENOUS is prepared to share by license its best practices and innovative supply chain transparency tools with any fashion brand that is willing to stand up and take the pledge that “no one will suffer or die to make our clothes. Instead, they will prosper,” They will also immediately adopt new standards of transparency. “This is a call to action for you to stand up and be heard,” says Leonard.

About INDIGENOUS

INDIGENOUS is considered a true pioneer in premium eco-sensitive and socially-conscious apparel. INDIGENOUS has provided organic and fair-trade quality clothing since 1994, and has established itself as the first name in premium eco fashion, employing over 1,500 highly skilled artisans in knitting groups and cooperatives. The INDIGENOUS collection is available through premium specialty boutiques and catalogues nationwide. Learn more at www.indigenous.com or www.facebook.com/indigenoussdesigns.

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