

## **BUY GOOD STUFF: A student project for sustainable fashion and local communities**

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### **Abstract**

We would like to discuss our interdisciplinary student project BUY GOOD STUFF, a fair fashion shopping guide for local cities and regions. Hypothesis: Although many opinion polls show, that consumer would like to buy more sustainable cloth, they claim, that the market doesn't offer such clothes (CSR-News 2016). In reality, there exists a broad offer of sustainable cloth in the market. Consumers need information about the offer and criteria of sustainable fashion in form of an attractive fashion guide.

The shopping list of BUY GOOD STUFF is based on students' comprehensive market surveys of local fashion retail. The project is based on field research applying the method of supply and demand research concerning sustainable fashion in local cities and regions (Hermann/Homburg/Klarmann 2007; Bethlehem 2017). In addition, the guide assesses critically the conventional fashion system (Hoskins 2022) and offers a multitude of sustainable alternatives (topic: pro-sustainability journalism and communication). The fashion guide answers several questions: Which serious problem are fashion production and consumption facing today? What are the criteria of fair and/or ecological fashion? (Fletcher/Tham 2016) How can one convince consumers to buy more sustainable fashion? (Klymkiw 2020) Where can one buy such clothes nearby? How can consumers and designers change their mindset and the fashion system (topics: ethics on buying: consumer behaviour, processes of change in the fashion system)? (Muthu 2018) How can design of sustainable cloth be more attractive and fashionable (topic: ethics and aesthetics of fashion sustainability)? The production of one guide usually takes one to two semesters and involves several study groups. Students of fashion management conduct and analyze surveys of the local fashion stores and write essays about local concept stores or local designers of sustainable fashion. Students of fashion journalism develop the concept for the publication in form of a magazine, they also contribute essays about various aspects of sustainability in fashion and produce fashion photo series.

Our experience has shown, that this project is well suited to build up long lasting relationships with local cities, communities and NGOs as well as other universities.

**Goals and results of the BUY GOOD STUFF project:**

- Building long lasting relationships with local communities through collaborations with local retailers, fashion companies, consumers, NGOs, other universities and state organizations
- Raising awareness of sustainable issues among fashion students in different study programs (design, management, journalism) (Leal Filho 2017)
- Acquiring competencies in the field of fashion and sustainability
- Applying methods of critical thinking and market research (Berekoven/ Eckert/ Ellenrieder 2009)
- Learning to collaborate in interdisciplinary teams (inside and outside the university)
- Establishing a long-term sustainable project at the university
- Determining the local status quo of sustainable fashion retail
- Raising consumers' and retailers' awareness of ethical and ecological issues of fashion (Becker-Leifhold/ Heuer 2018)
- Bundling of information in a creative and attractive consumer magazine
- Multiplying the series in different cities or regions
- BUY GOOD STUFF exists now in a printed version for Düsseldorf (2014), Cologne (2017), Berlin (2018), Munich (2019), Ruhr area (2019). Its website [www.buygoodstuff.de](http://www.buygoodstuff.de) publishes the information and includes a navigation system for smartphones. The website also includes the city of Bonn.
- The AMD has been established as an expert for sustainable fashion, frequently requested by public media and as speakers at public events.

**Objectives and method of the workshop:** We will discuss our method of research, structure of the questionnaire and evaluate the results of the market research. In addition, we would like to use the workshop in order to inform and encourage other participants to share and join the project in their own town or local region. Our method will be a short presentation (keynotes) and a guided discussion.

**Keywords:** pro-sustainability journalism, sustainable ethics and aesthetics, consumer behaviour, fashion retail, change of fashion system.

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