The optimal care label for G-Star Raw

The product coming forward out of this research is an advice for an optimal care label for G-Star RAW. It is based on the outcomes of the survey done for this research, but also on extra information I collected and saw on other labels.

G-Star is a global retailer and that is why the brand covers the mandatory rules concerning fibre content and wash and care. Their size is clearly indicated on all garments (and as research shows this is the most important feature for consumers on a care label, this is already covered by G-Star).

However, looking at other aspects of a care label, there are some, on which G-Star could improve.

Country of origin

Indicating the country of origin is very difficult, however other brands such as Dusseldorf based fashion label WunderWerk make a distinction between styled and assembled rather than just stating “made in” on the care label. G-Star could take this brand as an example. Claiming to be innovative, G-Star could start being the first global denim brand that makes a distinction between “made in” and “assembled” or “styled” in.

For products such as denim this is hardly feasible, because often the products is made out of different components from different countries and parts of the product are made in different countries. But there are options to give the consumer more transparency regarding this subject. On the template enclosed with this advice, an option of scanning a QR code is given. However, there are much more advanced technologies, such as Layar Concepts which create augmented reality experiences by scanning a product (or part of the product). An option for this is that by scanning G-Star’s iconic back pocket signature (called the WOKKIE) with a mobile phone, a movie pops up giving an explanation on how and where the jeans were made. Next to that, it would be a great way for G-Star to track and analyse their customers (behaviour).
Voluntary labelling
As became clear during the case study of G-Star, the brand wants to do everything in-house. This seems logical, but on the other hand it looks like G-Star wants to protect itself against the risk of not meeting the criteria of environmental and social labelling. However, with the current growing consumer awareness of labelling on environmental and social level the brand should consider that consumers and governments demand more transparency on those subjects in the future. Communicating their voluntary labelling through a scorecard from Made By will not be enough in the future. Especially on a social level G-Star should consider communicating a label on the care label. If G-Star aims to target a group of consumers that have an interest in organic cotton, the brand should consider that this group of people would also like to have more transparency about the brands’ activities regarding social labelling.

Promotion
The G-Star Raw for the Oceans Campaign launched in 2014 was very successful and even celebrities such as Afrojack en Sarah Jessica Parker have been spotted wearing sweaters made from recycled ocean plastic. There has been a lot of discussion about whether this was “just” a marketing campaign rather than an effective action to clean up the oceans. The former seems the most probable, however this doesn’t mean that this campaign did not help the brand put transparency about their environmental practices into a new daylight. The way G-Star did this, being very transparent and open about the process of manufacturing of G-Star’s garments brings me to the point I would like to make and give advice on G-Star’s social practices.

As G-Star RAW has it’s own GSRD Foundation, it is logical to think that the step in the right direction is already made; on the website the brand “Supports projects in China and Bangladesh”. However, they do not clearly want to communicate what these projects exactly comprise (NRC, van Keeken, H. and Van Der Vlier, 2015) . That is why G-Star should take an example from their Raw for The Oceans Campaign and do something similar concerning ethical practices.

As mentioned before, It seems that people who care about environmental issues, also care about organic clothing and social issues. A social label is definitely missing in G-Star’s care label. Becoming a member of the Fair Wear Foundation would be a good first step. Besides that, looking at G-Star’s history concerning labour conditions in one of the factories they work with (Fibres and Fabrics in Bangalore) it gives the brand an opportunity to show that it is willing to improve on this subject.

Happy human beings....
Picture from www.g-star.com