MEET “THE CONSCIOUS COOL-KIDS”

//TRIBE BOOKLET

Meet The Newly Recommended Target Group For American Apparel’s Comeback On The Dutch Market.
This booklet introduces “The Conscious Cool-Kids” as newly recommended target group for American Apparel’s comeback on the Dutch market. “The Conscious Cool Kids” form a subgroup of “Gen Z” and can be identified as young adults between the age of 19 and 23. The group of “The Conscious Cool-Kids” contains all sexes and is mainly represented in capital cities and urban surroundings.

Throughout the following pages, the characteristics, lifestyle and mindset of “The Conscious Cool-Kids” will be presented. In addition, the choice of this target group for American Apparel’s comeback on the Dutch market will be explained.
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The “Conscious Cool-Kids” are a group of boys and girls within the age of 19 and 23. They are living in urban surroundings, bigger cities which leave them the opportunity to do and become what and whoever they want to be.

The members of the target group are following studies which are based on their interests, rather than on what they want to become after graduating. The tribe has a busy life, as besides their studies they are also working - they want to be as independent as possible, regarding their income and everything else.

They crave for as many social contacts as possible, filling all their spare time with seeing friends and other social activities. They are interested in reducing their environmental footprint and care a lot about their daily eating habits. They have a strong opinion and like to keep themselves informed about current societal and political issues.
The “Conscious Cool-Kids” are old enough to remember the brand and its products and connoate the brand mainly with a hype created by older kids, colourful products and good quality items. As back in the days they were too young to actually purchase the products themselves, visiting the brand’s retail stores was a exciting social activity for them - talking about it, they immediately get reminded of “the cool vibe” in all American Apparel stores.

They are aware that the brand then became known for “sexy and confronting ads”, but were again too young to really realize the serious accusations regarding objectification and pornographie. Therefore, the tribe has no disturbing connotations or negative experiences with the brand.

“The Conscious Cool-Kids” are also not aware of the positive ethical values and practices of American Apparel, but would clearly see those as a reason to reconnect with the brand again.

Unfortunately the target group is not aware of the brand’s comeback yet. Something to change through re-introducing the brand to this tribe, by emphasizing the brand’s ethical practices.

"The Conscious Cool-Kids” do want to make more conscious choices regarding their buying behaviour, but do miss transparency and background information when it comes to fashion brands. The most important factor for the tribe in everything a brand does, is authenticity.

American Apparel has always been a brand that cared about various ethical and environmental aspects and would therefore be able to appear completely authentic. The brand provides information regarding those topics on its website, but didn’t communicate these values clear enough to create awareness - nor back in the days, nor after its comeback.

Here lays a win-win chance: For American Apparel to clearly communicate its ethical values and for the tribe to get to know a brand’s background, in order for them to fulfill their desire to be more conscious with regards to purchasing fashion.

The target group craves for brands that are hands on regarding sustainability, but are not stigmatized with an unsexy and typical biological image. American Apparel for them is synonymous with cool vibe, a certain sexyness and the in your face attitude they like to practice themselves. Adding the ethical aspects, American Apparel would cater the perfect conditions for “The Conscious Cool-Kids”: Not politically correct, but with good ethics. Or just as simple: cool but caring.
“The Conscious-Cool Kids” grew up surrounded by kids with several different nationalities. Therefore they make no difference in race or skin-colour, but are inter-cultural by nature. They value authenticity and realness more than caring about somebody’s nationality or look. They also don’t care what kind of sexual preferences somebody has and are pro LGBT+. As long as somebody is kind, sincere and as open-minded as they are, they wouldn’t look down on anybody.

They do think that it is more than important to be informed about everything that is going on in the world and call it stupid if others don’t do so. Their take on political aspects is open-minded, liberal and, above all, anti-racist. In addition, they want a political party to support their effort to reduce everybody’s environmental footprint. The party that supports their interests the most, would be “Groen-Links”.

They value clothing as a tool to express themselves but do not care what others based on their outfits think about them. That is, because they want to be valued for more than their superficial, namely their characters. They get angry when talking about wasting materials and do not understand that people e.g. buy plastic bags on a regular basis. They are aware that they don’t do everything perfectly yet either, but what counts for them the most, is effort.

They are open for other perspectives and like to discuss about certain topics, but do clearly have a strong opinion of their own. They have peaceful mindsets until they experience injustice - which makes them furious.

“They know what they want, have a sassy spirit and like to be rebellious every now and then. But other than that they like to keep it peaceful and would wish for the whole world to do so either.”
The Conscious-Cool Kids” show an above-average interest for societal issues, their environmental footprint and a conscious nutrition (see page 17).

Besides their studies, side-jobs and other regularly scheduled activities, they are interested in art and other forms of creative expressions. They therefore like to visit exhibitions and do things as e.g. crafting or photography - not with a special aim, but just for themselves. They do not have a preference regarding a certain type of art and do not just go to exhibitions if they know which artist’s work is displayed, but just love visiting museum as activity itself. They love to be surprised by the showcased artwork and like to discover new artists.

The members of the target read the newspaper online and on a daily basis, preferring serious sources as e.g. the Dutch npo. They are also the checking the latest news on their phones every morning.

The tribe is busy with implementing more and more sustainable aspects into their lives. Little by little, step by step, they try to reduce their use of wasteful materials, starting by e.g. buying metal straws. They are also trying to separate their waste - even though the cities they are living in do not make that particular easy for them. Additionally they are trying to always use their bikes, doing their bits to reduce their gas footprint.

Furthermore, “The Conscious Cool-Kids” are interested in movements and love to let their voices be heard - whether it is on Instagram, a discussion with like-minded people, or through demonstrations, although they are quite picky with the latter. They wouldn’t join a demonstration just for the sake of it, but only if they have a point of view or opinion regarding the demonstration’s topic.
Spare Time.

“The Conscious Cool-Kids” do not have a lot of spare time. If they do something besides their studies, work and weekly scheduled activities, it will mostly be socially related.

The tribe loves nothing more than to hang out with friends and like-minded people. They eat, drink and party together, discuss current topics, visit exhibitions and other types of events, as e.g. panel discussions, talks and readings.

Apart from those socially-focussed activities, they love to discover new music, are busy with creative stuff as e.g. sketching or can be found browsing in second-hand shops.

On a sunny day off, they would enjoy their life outside, in a park for a picnic, or on a terrace, having a few drinks. On a rainy day, they would stroll in museums or cook dinner with friends.

For this tribe, music is not just a tool to relax, but also a social activity. In the summertime, they try to catch as many festivals as possible, wherein camping and the social aspects of several day-festival nearly play an more important role than just the music itself.

As “The Conscious Cool-Kids” value good food, in their spare time they are spending quite some time on planning and doing their groceries, as well as on preparing meals and cooking (see also page 17).

“Besides taking moments for myself, spending time with friends is the most important thing for me in order to retreat from my busy schedule - even though I sometimes get stressed by wanting to meet too many people within one week."

Chachelli, 20
Eating Habits.

Besides attaching great importance to other sustainable topics, “The Conscious Cool-Kids” value nothing more than good food. Doing groceries is for them not just a quick stop at the next supermarket, but something they plan very well. Not only related to the cost, but also to reduce their waste. As they hate to throw food away, they try to plan their whole week in advance and really take their time to do groceries for the whole following week.

They are not necessarily vegetarian or vegan, but try to reduce their consumption of meat. Not because they are excessively animal-loving, but because they are aware of the gas emission impact meat has on our environment. If they eat meat, they prefer to know where it came from. In general, they tend to buy fresh food, rather than e.g. frozen stuff and take their time in supermarkets to check the labels and background information.

They are willing to spend more money for good-quality groceries, and would want to buy everything at biological supermarkets as e.g. Marqt. As they are studying and do not (yet) have the resources to do so, they still need to buy several things at “normal” supermarkets, wherein they prefer Lidl, as they like the freshness of their vegetables and fruit.

The sustainable aspect is not the only reason that this tribe has a special habit when it comes to food. Besides that, they also like to have the feeling that they are eating healthy and giving their bodies and minds the best nutrition they can. That doesn’t mean, that they would never eat fries every now or then or that they would reject a coke or alcoholic beverages. But for the largest part of their life, they are paying attention. And again; it is not about being flawless, but about the effort they are making. And even though their efforts do not always work out as smoothly as they would wish them to, the most important thing is that they have a really conscious approach towards food and that they are thinking about what they are putting in them - something a lot of people could learn from.
The “Conscious Cool-Kids” prefer authenticity over everything else - especially regarding fashion brands and their communication. The tribe believes that fashion brands can be more powerful in addressing social issues, than the government. They are therefore waiting for brands who are really doing something for real, instead of just saying so, or only printing t-shirts with certain statements on it.

The “Conscious Cool-Kids” prefer to invest in high quality pieces, rather than buying a bunch of sale shirts, because they don’t like to throw things away - in general, but also in terms of fashion. Basics do form an important component within their wardrobe and they are willing to pay a higher price for good quality items.

Unfortunately, they still do buy items at e.g. Zara and the H&M - even though deep down they know, how bad fast fashion is.

They really do have the desire to make better choices in purchasing the right brands and products, but are still ignoring their bad conscience too often.

The reason for that is, that they are insecure about how good or bad brands and their products really are, as they do not feel informed enough and do miss the transparency of brands.

The “Conscious Cool-Kids” see clothes as a tool to express themselves. They do not get deterred by other’s people judgement though - the most important thing is their own comfort. They wear whatever they like to wear, as long as it doesn’t cost too much time to combine.

Despite or just because their casual, carefree and laid-back attitude towards their outfits, they always manage to appear with an attitude that is beyond cool.
“The Conscious Cool-Kids” are using social media on a regular basis, their smartphones are loyal companions.

Beside Whatsapp for texting, they are mainly using Instagram, which they describe as personal visual dairy and an online opportunity to show of their personalities and lifestyle. They aim to keep their posts as real as possible instead of painting picture perfect. Retouching and heavy filters is something they reject. This also applies to the people and accounts they are following. Besides friends and like-minded people, they prefer influencers with a critical view, who stay true to themselves. “The Conscious Cool-Kids” prefer to follow accounts that discuss everyday and societal topics, such as food, certain movements, health and lifestyle.

“Faded glory” is the term they use to describe Snapchat. They still have it on their phones, but stopped using it as soon as Instagram introduced the Insta Stories, which they now use instead.

Eventhough the young ambitious creators are neither scrolling through their Facebook feeds, nor posting personal messages or images, they still find Facebook an important tool with regards to activities. They refer to it as birthday overview, event agenda and tool to stay updated about happenings in the cities they live in.

“In the Netherlands I find fashion influencers very frustrating. Everyone looks the same, in terms of vibe, but also clothing, and I don’t find that personal at all.”

Melis, 22

“The influencers that I follow are all quite critical in terms of what they wear and also in terms of advertising, and what brands may or may not sponsor them.”

Isabeau, 20
THANK YOU.