



## Outline of The Circle

The Circle is an NGO founded, in 2008, by Annie Lennox, the acclaimed singer, songwriter and human rights activist. A women's rights organisation, registered as a UK charity in 2015, it exists to empower the most marginalised women who are unable to realize their rights.

Campaigners for fashion industry reform Livia Firth and Lucy Siegle are both members and Ambassadors of The Circle. Within The Circle is The Lawyers Circle, a collective of members who work within the legal profession, which was founded by Melanie Hall, QC and Miriam Gonzalez. Members of The Circle lend their skills, network and resources to support and promote the rights of disempowered women. In its last audited year, ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, The Circle's total income was £430,305 and expenditure £251,701, with 63% of remaining funds for restricted purposes.

## The Living Wage Initiative

The Fast Fashion industry generates vast revenues, with recent sums of USD 3 trillion being quoted, and uses a business model that turns around enormous quantities of cheap clothing, produced with very short lead times and made by globally-sourced cheap labour. In addition, multinational companies can quickly move their production to countries with lower wages. The risk of losing this investment acts as a disincentive for countries to improve their labour laws and provide living wage rules. The result is labour protection is kept to a minimum and essential rights to freedom of association are not guaranteed. Up to 75 million people work worldwide in the garment industry and with women making up 75% of the labour force they are disproportionately affected by these precarious and badly-paid employment conditions and are not receiving a living wage.

Frustrated by the lack of any significant progress in ensuring the right of a living wage for these millions of women and far too many empty promises from the industry itself The Circle set out to ensure this most basic of human rights can be realized. It has created a campaign to ***establish a legal mechanism that will get companies and states to pay garment workers a living wage that they are entitled to receive.***

In 2017, in partnership with the Clean Clothes Campaign and TrustLaw, The Circle published a 295 page report on wages and working conditions in the ready made garment sector, *Fashion Focus: The Fundamental Right to a Living Wage*. The report, led by The Lawyers Circle member Jessica Simor QC, established new legal argument that a living wage is a fundamental human right, and that companies and governments have a responsibility to uphold this right. Since the launch of the report at the Copenhagen Fashion Summit, The Circle has been presenting this

argument at other forum including the EU Parliament and the launch of the 'Platform Living Wage Financials' in The Hague. It has continued working with law makers and industry stakeholders, to test how international law and human rights legal frameworks and instruments can be applied in practical ways to lever the change needed to ensure the payment of living wages for millions of poor women in the global garment industry.

We now want to embark on a new larger phase, over the next 2 years, to take our Living Wage campaign to a new level. This will involve further research, extending our alliance building to further share knowledge and identifying the best legal and lobbying strategies so to establish a new EU directive to ensure the payment of living wages in supply chains.

## **Outline of objectives and related activities**

- ***To create a gear shift in the debate on the living wage that will engage key stakeholders with tangible alternatives to the status quo***
- Publish a second report in November 2019 in order to advance momentum in the implementation of living wages. The report will summarize progress being made within EU countries to establish living wages in supply chains and look at different areas of the EU application of law and regulation extra territorially which influences practices outside the EU.
- Develop ‘progressive platforms’ at global and national level to convene key fashion industry stakeholders and legal experts to advance the implementation of living wages.
- ***To formulate a new EU directive that will oblige garments/fashion companies to ensure the payment of a living wage in the manufacturing facilities they source from***
  - Progressive platforms debate findings from The Circle’s reports and work to finesse legal arguments and their practical application in the industry, to strengthen payment of the living wage.
  - Organise an annual Living Wage summit with lawyers, progressive companies, investors, NGOs and trade unions to ensure collaboration and synergy of actions in this area.
  - Draft a new EU directive and begin advocating within the EU for adoption.
- ***To create a race to the top in which companies compete to demonstrate best practice in complying with the proposed law***
- Bring progressive business leaders onto our progressive global platform to gain from their knowledge of how best to incentivise companies to ‘do the right thing’.
- Engage the public, through targeted media and with high profile individuals, to both understand the issue of wages and fast fashion and how to influence through their purchasing power by identifying good and bad company policy and practices.

### **Budget:**

The total cost of the 2 year project is £181,650 (which does not include the pro bono time given by The Circle members and others)

<b>COSTS</b>	<b>Budget (Yr1)</b>	<b>Budget (Yr2)</b>
<b>People costs:</b> 1 x part time project manager for full two years	£35,000	£35,000
<b>Ad hoc People costs:</b> Campaigner consultancy and Policy adviser consultancy	£8,000	£16,000
<b>Events:</b> 2 x Living wage summits. 1per year @ £15,000 (include venue hire, materials etc)	£15,000	£15,000
<b>Research :</b> for the campaign	£5,500	£5,500
<b>Report Production and distribution :</b> 1 report a year.	£5,000	£5,000
<b>Travel:</b> for team to attend meetings /events and high profile media trip in year 2	£3,000	£7,000
<b>Communications :</b> General PR media planning and overseas trip in Yr2	£4,000	£12,000
<b>Office costs</b>	£1,000	£1,000
<b>Overheads:</b> Governance, legal and financial support	£3,825	£4,825
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>£80,325</b>	<b>£101,325</b>

**Timescale:** The 2 year project started on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 and will finish in 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

**Measuring the success and impact of the project**

The success of the project will be measured by the progress made towards achieving the 3 campaign objectives. While the goal of achieving a new legal directive is likely to be longer than the campaign timeframe, progress can be measured by ensuring the main deliverables (publication of the report, the success of the Living Wage Summit etc) occur within the timeframe and budget. Monitoring and evaluation towards these objectives will take place throughout the project. In assessing the impact of the project and the changes which have resulted from it, a number of criteria and related indicators will be selected for evaluation including: changes made in the legal landscape regarding new legislation and support, changes made in attitudes and behaviour of companies and that of consumers.