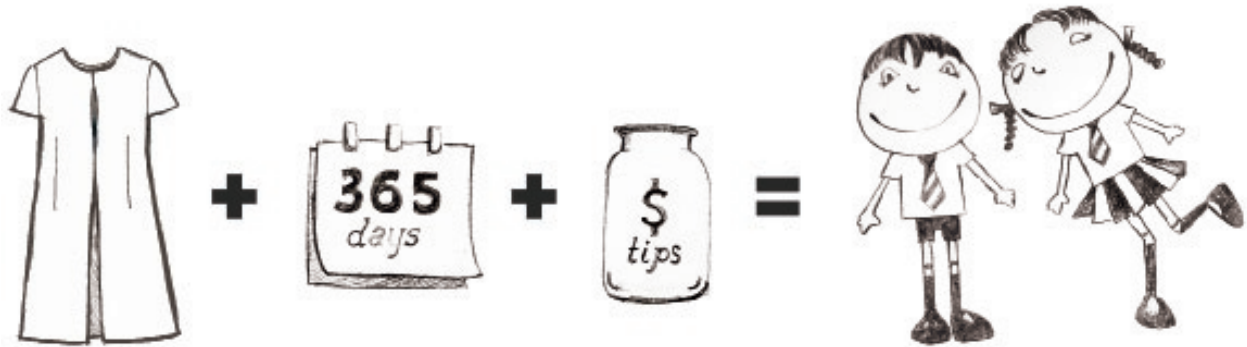




THE
UNIFORM
PROJECT
1 DRESS 365 DAYS

THE UNIFORM PROJECT MISSION

The Uniform Project Foundation advocates a socially responsible future through creative ventures. As an online platform that embraces a sustainable and charitable culture through the mediums of design, fashion, social media and digital philanthropy, The U.P. enables a socially connected world of consumers to converse, donate, and transact compassionately and sustainably, via the use of its evolving digital networks. Since their inception in February 2009, The Uniform Project continues to evolve radically as an international movement for positive change.



THE FIRST INITIATIVE: DESIGN A DRESS, WEAR IT FOR 365 DAYS

The foundation's first project began in May 2009, when Sheena Matheiken launched a 365 day creative fundraiser dubbed The Uniform Project, by pledging to wear the same dress for an entire year. The dress was designed by her friend and partner on the venture, Eliza Starbuck, who made 7 identical garments, one for each day of the week. Sheena's challenge is to reinvent the uniform dress everyday by way of accessorizing with sustainable goods – vintage, handmade or recycled items.

While a playful exercise in sustainable fashion, the social mission of the project focuses on the needs to raise funds for educating underprivileged children in India. The Uniform Project selected the Akanksha Foundation, to be the beneficiary of the first initiative. For the past 19 years, Akanksha has been revolutionizing the Indian education system, beginning with the children living in the slums. With the Indian government spending an average of \$360 on each child's public school year– 80% of whom drop out before reaching the 10th grade– Akanksha has vowed to spend the same amount on every child in the slums to afford them an education that is both well rounded and focused on maintaining high retention rates.

On why she chose fashion as a vehicle for fund-raising, Sheena states:

“Fashion is clearly a visual and subjective medium, so it offered an intrinsic draw. I wanted to take the daily act of dressing up – a routine everyone relates to – and make it a part of something bigger, something more consequential. The repetitive model of a 365 day project brings viewers back on a regular basis, which made it a great platform for fundraising.”



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[About](#)[Blog + News](#)[Dress For Sale](#)[Donate Accessories](#)[Donate To The Cause](#)

Funds Raised:
what's this for?

\$51,318 =
142 kids in school

[View Dailies](#)[View By Month](#)

May 09
Jun 09
Jul 09
Aug 09
Sep 09
Oct 09
Nov 09
Dec 09

The funds raised from this project go to the Akanksha Foundation for the education of underprivileged children in India.

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Wed. Nov 25



Tue. Nov 24



Mon. Nov 23



Sun. Nov 22



Sat. Nov 21



Fri. Nov 20



Thu. Nov 19



Wed. Nov 18



Tue. Nov 17



Mon. Nov 16



She was right about the addictive nature of the project; the viral response thus far has been overwhelming. Within 6 months, the site received over a million hits, and to date has raised over \$50,000 in funds for Akanksha. The blogosphere picked up the project within days after launch, and they now have a reach of over 100,000 twitter and facebook users along with a regular audience that tune in daily to provide colorful commentary on the daily posts. The public also participates by donating pre-owned, vintage or handmade accessories to aid Sheena's daily ensembles. Sheena and Eliza simultaneously collaborate with sustainable fashion designers of influence around the world, thus evolving the site into a global platform for independent ethical designers to showcase their work.

Recognition and support has also come from like minded businesses that share the U.P's commitment to sustainability and social responsibility. In October, the eBay Green Team initiated a 're-purpose' campaign showcasing the U.P, enabling them to raise another 12K in funds. Following this, eBay also offered a holiday initiative whereby they matched every donation made to U.P's cause in the month of December 09. The U.P also collaborates actively with another kindred business that exemplifies handmade culture – Etsy.com– by featuring many Etsy sellers on their dailies and by holding virtual lab sessions at the Etsy office, thereby reaching millions of Etsy followers. Sheena and Eliza also sat as panelists at the London Design Festival in Sept 2009 and were guest speakers at New York's Google headquarters in Oct 2009.



WHO IS BEHIND THE UNIFORM PROJECT?

Sheena Matheiken is the founder and chief creative director of The Uniform Project. Prior to the U.P, she has been working as a creative director at a Publicis owned interactive ad agency in New York, with an MFA in Design and Technology from Parsons School of Design, NY and a BFA in Art from Stella Maris College, Chennai, India. Her experience in interactive media spans over 10 years and has been key to the positioning and viral success of The Uniform Project. Attending public school in India where uniforms were a mandate, Sheena was surrounded by the creative ingenuity of young adolescents who always found ways around the regiment to flaunt their personalities. Growing up in India, she also had exposure to the spirit and resilience of children in the slums thriving through inopportune circumstances. With the The Uniform Project, Sheena set out to create a playful vehicle of creativity that served as a public platform to raise awareness and funds for these underprivileged children.

Co-founder and designer of The U.P dress, Eliza Starbuck, is a New York based design consultant, with a BFA in fashion design from Parsons School of Design, and 10 years of experience in the fashion industry. Growing up in mid-western America, Eliza found local thrift stores and vintage boutiques the most affordable option to sustainable fashion. During her time within the fashion establishment, she found herself searching for creative counterparts that approached fashion with a similar sense of social responsibility. The quest for likeminded sartorialists introduced her to Sheena, which eventually lead to The Uniform Project. It should go without saying that Eliza's infinitely versatile black dress is the backbone of the everyday success of The Uniform Project.

Key to their mission, U.P founders Sheena and Eliza believe that socially responsible ventures are better served when combined with serious doses of fun and creativity.

THE FUTURE

The U.P plans to further expand its reach and boost its fundraising efforts in 2010 by making the little black dress available for sale in spring 2010 and by holding online auctions of the donated accessories. The company anticipates that in the second half of 2010, it will also launch a licensing program to enable other individuals or non-profits to license the U.P platform to raise funds for local initiatives, as approved by the U.P. Furthermore, there are numerous publishers interested in turning the U.P's first year wearthon into a collector's design book.

QUOTES FROM THE PRESS

“Scientists have already found the part of the brain that we use when we want to buy something new... could The Uniform Project be the way round buying less but still stimulating our cortex?”

- The Guardian, UK

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2009/jun/24/uniform-project-one-dress-year>

“By illustrating how creative you can be with one simple dress, Matheiken is standing up to today's culture of fast fashion.”

-The Times of London

http://women.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/women/fashion/article6796836.ece

“The website encourages people to comment on the day's look, with the idea being that doing so will stimulate discussion and other options for living a sustainable life... The exercise has become an international phenomenon.”

- The Sydney Morning Herald, Australia

<http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/fashion/one-dress-365-different-looks-20090819-eqcw.html?page=-1>

“How will the future of fashion -- one predicated on continual consumption -- survive in a world of limited resources? Can fashion -- the cultural apex of illimitable desire -- ever be sustainable? Sheena Matheiken is attempting to answer those questions -- one outfit at a time...”

-PBS.ORG, Art Beat

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/blog/2009/07/the-1-dress-sustainability-solution.html>

“What's immediately striking about clicking through the day-by-day photos on the Uniform Project is that two months into wearing the same thing every day, Matheiken is still way more stylish than you are.”

-The New York Times, Sunday Magazine

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/12/magazine/12fob-consumed-t.html?_r=2&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss

“The versatile uniform designed by Starbuck for the project proves to satisfy the demands of any occasion or whimsy.”

-Elle, Canada

<http://www.ellecanada.com/fashion/i-adieu-i-fast-fashion/a/29779>

“Every woman who has stared into a closet brimming with clothes and lamented she has nothing to wear should check out Sheena Matheiken’s website.”

- The Toronto Star

<http://www.thestar.com/living/article/666645>

“Fashion is the epitome of narcissism and vanity, right? Wrong. As Sheena Matheiken has proved along with designer Eliza Starbuck, fashion absolutely can be the vehicle for sustainability and philanthropy.”

-NEED Magazine

<http://www.needmagazine.com/blog/2009/08/26/fashion-with-a-heart/>

“The most impressive thing about The Uniform Project is it’s wild marketing success and focus. Sheena and co. can offer us all a veritable tutorial on how to pull together an NPO that knows how to take advantage of incredible amount of fundraising resources available on the web”

- DonationPay

<http://donationpay.org/blog/?p=13>

“If wearing the same outfit three — okay, five — days in a row is wrong, we don’t want to be right.”

-Daily Candy

<http://www.dailycandy.com/video/70107/Same+As+It+Ever+Was>

LEARN MORE AT:

OFFICIAL WEBSITE: theuniformproject.com

THE U.P MOVIE: theuniformproject.com/home/trailer.html

TWITTER: twitter.com/uniformproject

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/pages/The-Uniform-Project/143115358195?ref=ts

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