



# THE ECO-FASHION TOOLKIT

AN INTERACTIVE HANDBOOK  
ON SUSTAINABLE FASHION

## **PART 1: BE AWARE... OF WHAT YOU WEAR!**

A collection of useful information on the current fashion industry and sustainable alternatives

## **PART 2: BE PREPARED... TO MAKE A CHANGE!**

A compilation of activities young people can do to make sustainable fashion choices



# Boosting youth towards Responsible and sustainAble choices in fashion inDUstry

This toolkit was developed within the framework of the EU project BRAND - Boosting youth towards Responsible and sustainAble choices in fashion inDUstry. Our aim is to raise awareness among young people about fast fashion and its effects on the environment and human rights. We want to inform and empower young people and youth workers to create a more sustainable fashion future.

Editor and Copyright: Südwind

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Edukacji  
i Przedsiębiorczości



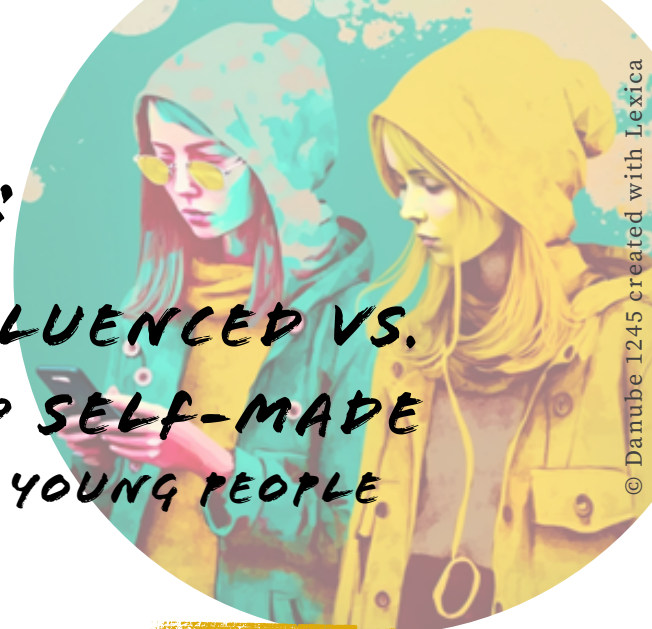
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# INTRO:

## MORE, FAST AND INFLUENCED VS. SHARED, REUSED AND SELF-MADE WHAT FASHION MEANS TO YOUNG PEOPLE



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Youths aged 17 to 24 show a tendency to buy primarily from **fast fashion stores**. These days they have more money than any other young consumer in history, and most of their disposable income is spent on new clothes.

Every second young person buys more online today than before the pandemic. Mobile shopping has clearly established itself among young people: Most purchases are made with a smartphone. Furthermore, young people prefer to inform themselves about products via search engines and social apps. At the same time, advertising by influencers significantly increases young people's willingness to buy - according to a 2022 youth study.

CHECK OUT  
OUR  
INFLUENCER  
VIDEOS!

### IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR IN RELATION TO CLOTHING

In contrast to the average or older age groups, young adults show different behaviours in some aspects of their clothing consumption. A 2022 Greenpeace survey showed that:

- The number of items of clothing young people bought in the last year is significantly higher than the average (27 vs. 18 items).
- Online orders and returns ("I always order more because I don't know what I actually like") are made significantly more often by young respondents than by other age groups.
- The period of use is noticeably shorter for young people than average.
- 50 percent of the young respondents stated that they buy second-hand clothes online and offline at the same time.
- Young people also tailor themselves more often.
- While older respondents use textile collection boxes significantly more often, 16- to 29-year-olds give away or sell their sorted clothing more often than older people.
- For young people, sharing clothes with other people is more common.
- 16- to 29-year-olds believe even more strongly than older people that sustainable systems relating to clothing (textile recycling, reuse, efforts by fashion companies) work well.

## GREAT CONTRADICTION BETWEEN CONSCIOUSNESS AND ACTION

Despite war and pandemic, **climate change** remains the number one issue for young Europeans. According to the latest Tui Youth Survey, most young Europeans see measures against climate change not as a restriction of their own freedom, but as something that can secure their freedom in the future.

Young people expect active support from the state in the fight against climate change; an example of which can be seen in bans to ensure that products and services are climate-friendly. At the same time, however, they also see a high level of individual responsibility in the fight against climate change.

According to the study, young people are therefore prepared to make concessions for climate protection, even if this means restrictions on their accustomed standard of living.

E.g. with regard to the consumption of clothing and shoes. On average, 43% of the European youth population surveyed also see themselves as part of a global climate movement.

Just as with older respondents, young people show a great contradiction between their great awareness of the problem (here in relation to the climate crisis) and their actual actions.

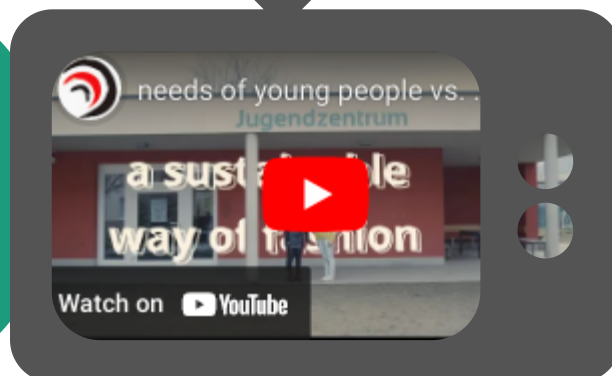
## HOW CAN THE BALANCING ACT SUCCEED?

What are possible links between the needs of young people and a sustainable way of fashion?

The dissonance between what young people enjoy and what their needs are on the one hand, and what they are concerned about and what their fears and wishes for the future are on the other hand becomes particularly clear in open youth work facilities.

We spoke to the manager of a youth centre in Frohnleiten, Austria, about how it is possible to take young people's needs seriously and nevertheless, or precisely because of this, to accompany them in discovering their own sustainable way of fashion and to try it out in practice.

WATCH OUR VIDEO  
"NEEDS OF YOUNG  
PEOPLE VS.  
SUSTAINABLE  
FASHION".



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## KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

[Gen Z cares about sustainability](#) | [Greenpeace Youth Study](#)



# PART 1: BE AWARE... OF WHAT YOU WEAR!

You want to dress trendy and at the same time you don't want to contribute to the fact that the clothes you wear negatively impact the environment and climate and that people may have been exploited during the manufacturing phase?

You want to find your own style but at the same time you don't want to fall for the marketing tricks and greenwashing of fashion companies?

All these problems and injustices can make your head spin...

**JUST CLICK ON THE QUESTIONS  
YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT!**

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE  
FASHION?

WHAT DOES CLOTHING HAVE  
TO DO WITH THE CLIMATE?

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH  
THE CURRENT FASHION  
INDUSTRY?

WHAT ARE MY  
CLOTHES MADE OF?

WHAT DOES TRANSPARENCY  
MEAN IN THE FASHION  
INDUSTRY?

ARE ANIMALS EXPLOITED  
FOR THE CREATION OF MY  
CLOTHES?

WHAT IS THE SUPPLY  
CHAIN LAW?

CAN THERE BE A  
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC  
SYSTEM?

HOW DO I RECOGNIZE  
GREENWASHING?

ARE WE CONSUMERS  
OR ARE WE HUMAN?

AND HOW CAN I GET ACTIVE??





## WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE FASHION?

The term “sustainability” is composed of three pillars; the environmental, the economic, and the social pillar. This contrasts greatly with what is usually associated with the mention of sustainability, as a common misconception is that this term solely deals with environmental consciousness.

Sustainable fashion deals with two of the three pillars of sustainability; the environmental pillar and the social pillar. Ethical fashion is a term used for clothing which is not only produced in an environmentally conscious manner, but is also concerned with the well-being of society. Ethical fashion is the polar opposite of the **fast fashion** industry, which has taken over the trends of today’s fashion.

A company putting ethical fashion into practice is concerned with the well-being of its employees and also extends its concern to all those impacted by the entire production process. Moreover, the impacts on the environment implemented by the production of garments are kept to a minimum by utilising sustainable materials and opting for the least-polluting and waste-creating **supply chain**.

One imperative attribute of ethical fashion is **transparency**. A transparent company actively seeks to openly share information about the supply chain and production processes applied by the company. This transparency empowers consumers by allowing them to be more informed about the products they are purchasing, thus allowing them to make more educated decisions with regards to what type of fashion industry they would like to support. This encourages consumers to pursue sustainable and responsible fashion practices.

While there are several companies which do not disclose their production processes to the public, there is an even more pressing underlying issue. A recently adopted marketing strategy called **“greenwashing”** is now being used to deceive consumers and give them the impression that they are supporting sustainable practices.



Supporting companies which produce ethical fashion is not the only decision which needs to be made by consumers to overcome the popular fast fashion industry. Having the availability of cheap and disposable fashion, it has become easier than ever to lose track of the amount of clothing one is purchasing. Therefore, if one wishes to practice ethical consumption, the user must not only be mindful of the quality of garments being purchased, but also of the quantity of items of clothing. High-quality clothing typically has a significantly longer lifespan than garments produced with a fast fashion mindset. This therefore casts doubt over whether fast fashion clothing really is the better economical choice for the type of clothing to be purchased.

When we hear the term “social pillar”, it is only natural that we directly correlate the term to the well-being of human society. In reality, however, we share our society with other living creatures, and their well-being must also be safeguarded. Many processes applied by the fashion industry have adverse effects on animals. However, we have the power to force companies away from the processes which harm animals. As consumers, we are able to choose which companies we would like to buy our garments from. By opting for clothing made of cruelty-free materials, which include materials such as vegan leather or materials which were not obtained by processes which mistreat animals, we are supporting ethical fashion brands and encouraging the non-ethical brands to shift towards cruelty-free products. High-quality clothing which did not involve the harm of innocent animals is termed Ethical luxury. By choosing clothing which falls under the ethical luxury category, we don't need to compromise animals' well-being and lives.

The goal of ethical fashion is to create a more sustainable and just fashion industry. It is a movement that prioritizes the well-being of people, animals, and the planet. The positive impact we can make by practicing ethical consumption and supporting companies which seek sustainable and socially responsible practices must not be underestimated, as we consumers have the power to make a worldwide impact on the fashion industry.



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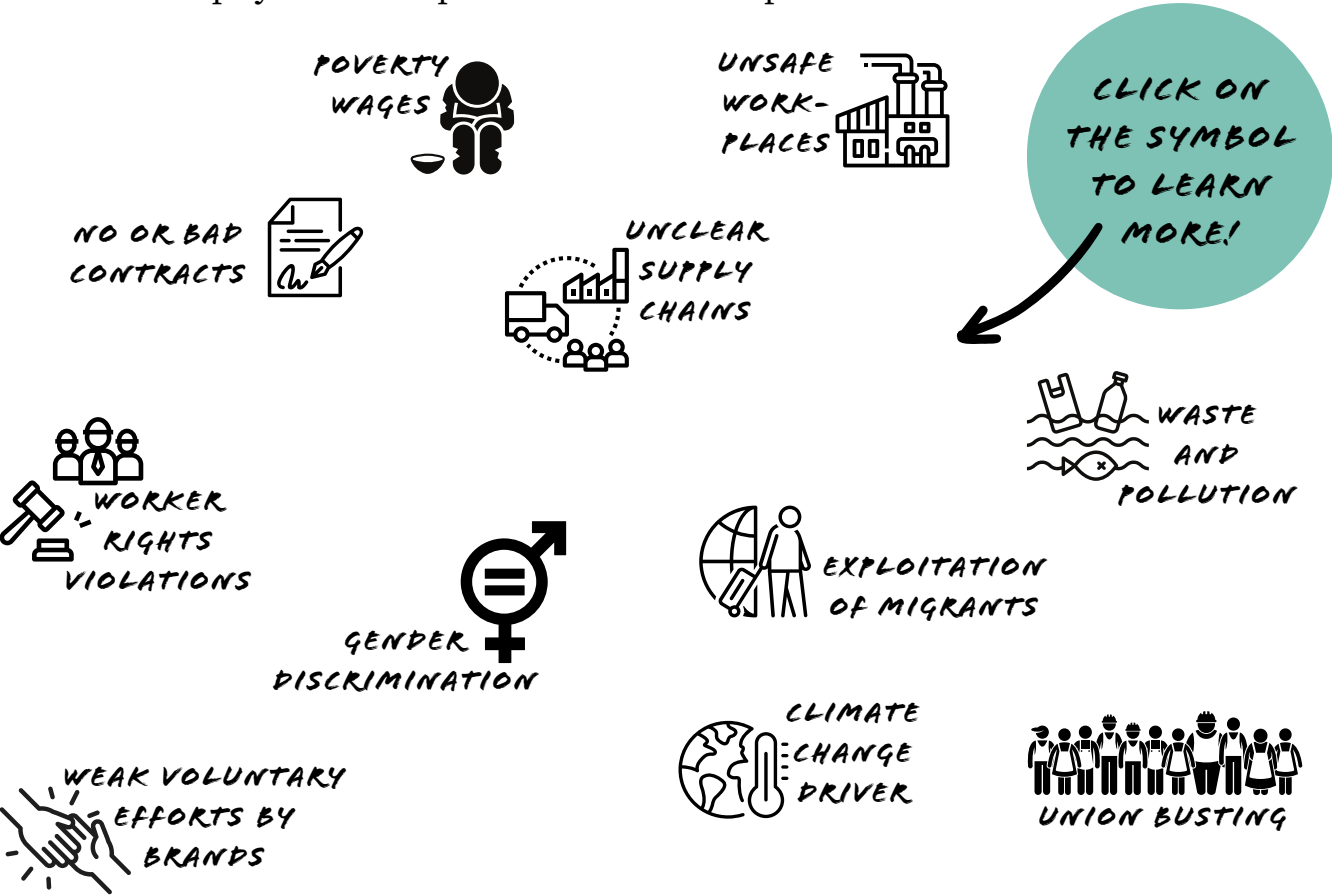
© Nora Brønseth, FIVH

# FAST, FASTER, ULTRA FAST FASHION

## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH THE CURRENT FASHION INDUSTRY?

Fast fashion stands for a clothing industry that produces and sells short-lived clothing at very low prices. To be able to guarantee low prices for their clothes, many "fast fashion" companies base their factories in low-wage countries and use cheap raw materials. This leads to both an increase in global environmental pollution and precarious working conditions. In addition, the constantly changing range of clothing also affects consumer behaviour. While consumers are buying more and more clothes, they wear any one set of clothes less often, sometimes not even once, before they dump them.

Let's take a closer look at how low prices are possible in the first place and who has to pay the real price for our cheap clothes...

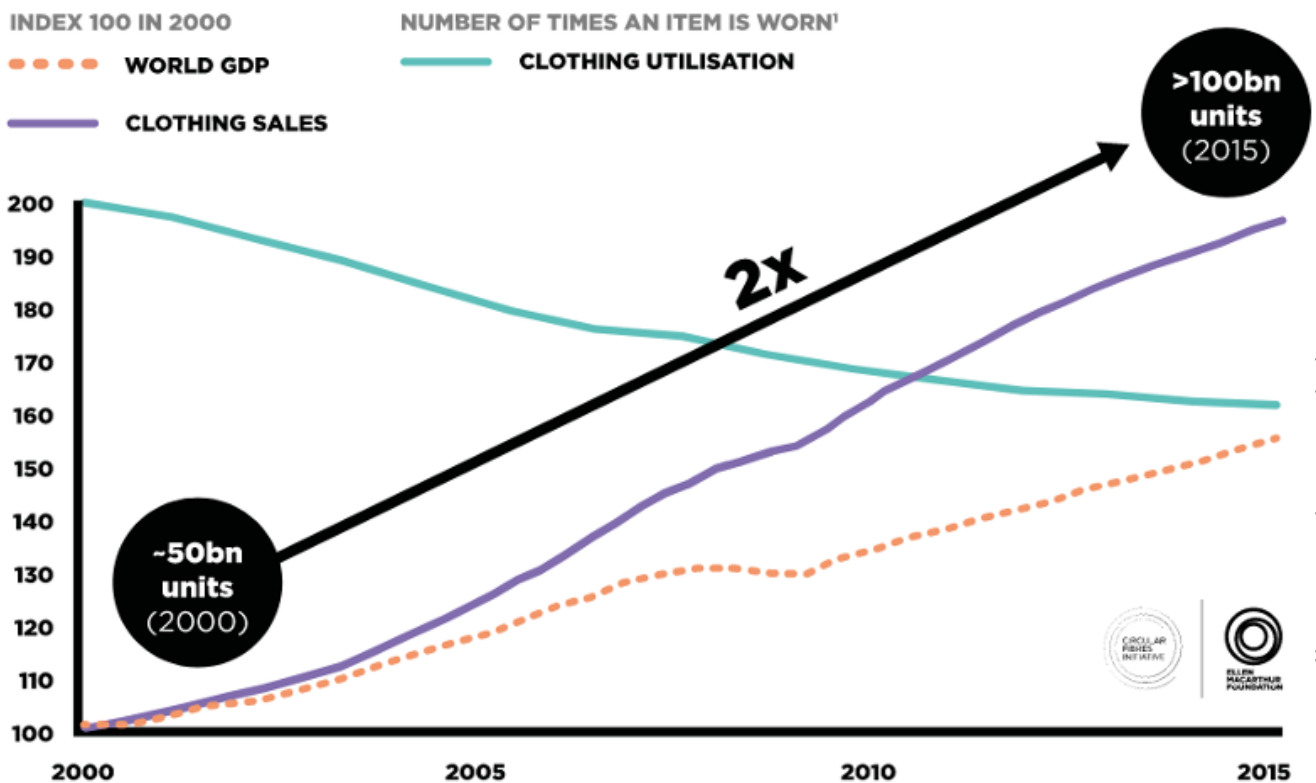






The fast fashion trend has drastically changed the consumer's attitude towards clothing. Instead of producing high-quality, durable clothing, fast fashion industries now sell cheap and disposable garments based on petrochemical fibre material.

This decrease in garment quality is one of the reasons why clothing has become more affordable and, considering that many households have a relatively high income, consumers are therefore inclined to buy larger volumes of clothes. The result of the fast fashion trend is a rapid turnover of clothing, as new styles are produced and sold in relatively shorter timespans. This is why clothing production has doubled over the years, while the lifetime of each individual fast fashion item has decreased. This trend is the root cause behind the sudden increase in textile waste over these last two decades.



Fast fashion has now become the standard model in the textile industry. A film that pulls back the curtain on an unseen part of our world and asks us each to consider who pays the price of our clothing, is the documentary „The True Cost“.

**HAVE A LOOK HERE:**



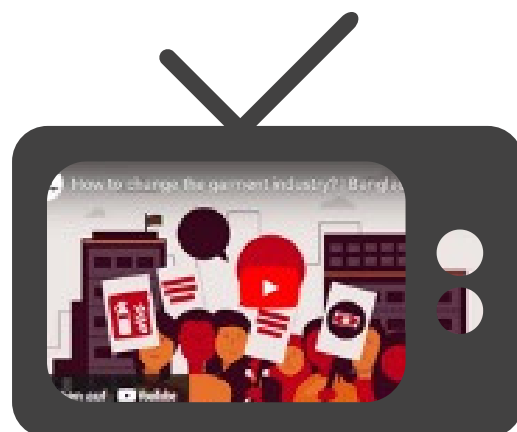
**IF YOU WANT TO WATCH THE WHOLE FILM CLICK HERE!**



If fast fashion is already the standard model in the textile industry, the "Ultra Fast Fashion" system takes it to the next level. The Ultra Fast Fashion company "Shein" for example puts around 5000 new items online in its shop every day. Ultra fast fashion companies make use of the large reach of influencers, who successfully bring cheap goods to young customers via social media. Many of these garments are worn only a few times and are then discarded. This is also because the quality of the raw materials and the finished garments is extremely inferior to non-fast fashion garments.

### **So what has to be done to combat this system, that is based on so much destruction and injustice?**

The Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) is active in the campaign for fair working conditions in the garment and footwear production worldwide. The CCC exposes human and labour rights violations in garment factories. It mobilises consumers and, with their support, campaigns for better working and living conditions for garment workers. In the video you can see a short summary of what the CCC does and what it campaigns for.



© clean clothes campaign

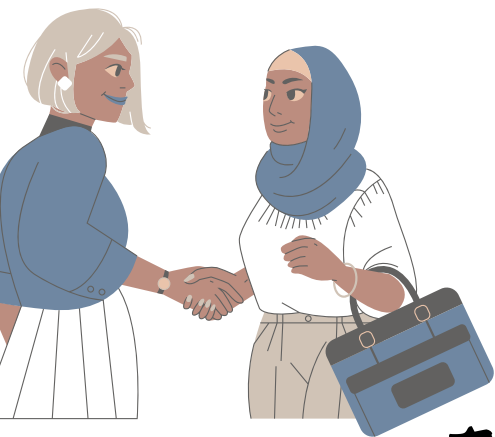
### **KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC**

[Europe Floor Wage](#) | [75-hour weeks for Shein](#) | [Clean Cloths Campaign](#)

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# THE UNTOLD TRUTH ABOUT MY GARMENTS

## TRANSPARENCY IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

When we buy clothes, the long journey the products had to go through before being showcased in a store, is typically not immediately apparent to us. A large number of people and processes are involved in converting raw materials to a finished garment, before ultimately transporting it to the retailer. The reason why we are mostly unaware of this process is because of the lack of transparency within the fashion industry.

If our aim is to become consumers who support ethical fashion, we need to make informed decisions. However, without transparency from the clothing brand's end, it becomes very difficult to determine if a company is being sustainable and ethical with its processes. Unfortunately, this is the reality with the majority of clothing companies. Additionally, a lack of transparency provides a breeding ground for unethical practices such as environmental pollution, forced labour and child labour, as companies which are not transparent are safe from society's scrutiny.

In order to cultivate a more sustainable and ethical fashion industry, transparency is a must.

Consumers play the vital role of pressuring companies into becoming transparent in their supply chain. On the other hand, as ethical consumers, we must appreciate the companies that do prioritise transparency and should do all that we can to support these brands. A transparent company can send out the message that it accepts accountability for its actions and is motivated to actively address the environmental and social issues incurred within its supply chain.

### KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

[Good on you](#) | [Green Story](#)

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IN A WORLD WHERE  
TRANSPARENCY IS BECOMING THE  
NORM, THE ABSENCE OF SUCH  
INFORMATION FROM CERTAIN  
COMPANIES IS CONSPICUOUS, AND  
BEGS THE QUESTION: WHAT ARE  
THEY HIDING?







Women protesting in front of H&M in solidarity with 1,300 workers of a supplier factory of the same brand in India who have been fired after building a union and asking for labor rights, 2020

## THE SUPPLY CHAIN LAW

### A POWERFUL TOOL TO GUARANTEE HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY, OR A TOOTHLESS BABY TIGER?

Where do our clothes come from? Who made them? And under what conditions? The answers to these questions usually remain hidden from us because most fashion brands are unwilling to publish this information, or don't even know the details of their supply chain themselves. Too often, they deny to the public the human rights violations at plantations or factories and environmental degradation that they accept within their facilities, or reject responsibility for them.

#### RANA PLAZA

##### A HORRIFIC INCIDENT FOLLOWED BY AN OUTCRY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN SUPPLY CHAINS

Only when the public was shocked by the pictures of the collapsed Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh in 2013 did the topic get more public attention. The collapse was the worst ever incident in the garment industry -1,134 workers died and more than 2,600 were injured. Human rights activists were searching for labels in the ruins of the factory for days to even find out which fashion brands had their clothes made there, only to find out it was well-known European companies including Benetton, Kik, Mango and Primark. After years of intensive campaigning, these brands were held responsible and had to contribute to the compensation of the victims. The difficulty in identifying which brands produced at Rana Plaza sparked a movement to ensure human rights standards and more transparency in the supply chain of garments.



1200 workers died in a collapse of the Rana Plaza factory, where brands like Kik or Mango had manufactured their garments.



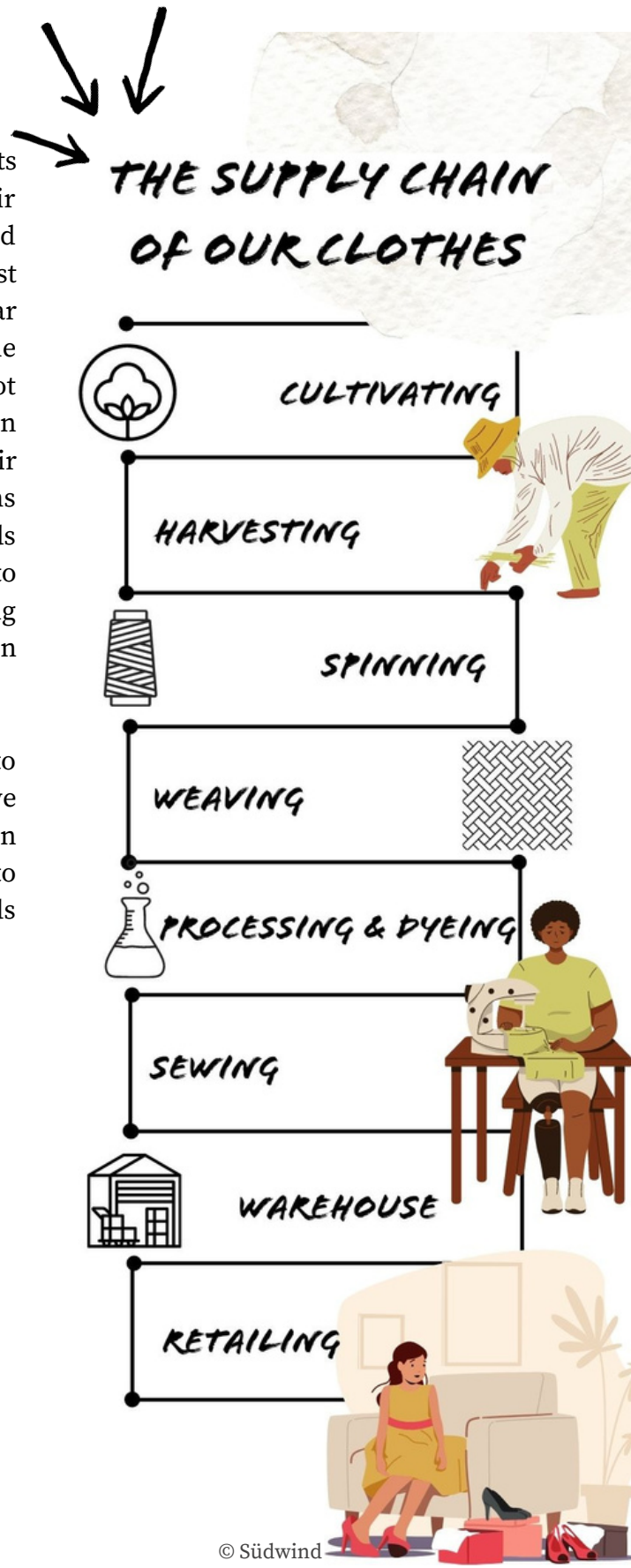
## BUT, FROM THE BEGINNING: WHAT IS A SUPPLY CHAIN?

Whenever we buy a new pair of shoes or a new shirt, we are part of a long chain of global events – a chain of people who are producing what we are consuming. The fashion supply chain refers to each step of the manufacturing process of a garment - from the sourcing of raw materials to the factories where those materials are processed, dyed and sewn, to the distribution and retail, to us, and the disposal. A t-shirt has most probably seen much more of world than us.

### SO, WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Companies often violate fundamental human rights and damage the environment in the course of their supply chains. Until now, companies cannot be held liable for such damages. In globalized trade, most production takes place in low-wage countries far away from the headquarters of the brands. The current legal situation in many countries does not allow companies to be held accountable for human rights violations and environmental damage in their production. Another problem is that supply chains are not transparent and extremely complex. Brands are outsourcing to suppliers, which subcontract to another company for various manufacturing processes, and these subcontractors often subcontract again.

It feels impossible and extremely overwhelming to change the system behind a powerful and lucrative business. The burden is so large that it can't rest on the shoulders of individuals – it needs a legal basis to make supply chains transparent and brands accountable.



## NOW, WHAT IS A SUPPLY CHAIN LAW?

A supply chain law can create a legal framework to improve the protection of the environment and human rights, particularly children's women's rights, along global supply chains. Companies that procure goods abroad must shoulder responsibility for the production processes and working conditions that their suppliers employ. They must trace abuses and prevent or stop them as soon as they become aware of them. Violations of this legal obligation result in fines.

## THE EU SUPPLY CHAIN ACT

At the EU level, a draft of an EU Supply Chain Act or Due Diligence Law was presented by the EU Commission in February 2022, which is still insufficient in the eyes of many NGOs. For example, the current draft affects an absolute minority of companies because it only looks at the largest brands and climate impacts are still neglected.

“ With the EU Supply Chain Act, it's like having a tiger cub: We are very happy that it is finally here - but it has to open its eyes first and teeth still have to grow.

Stefan Grasgruber-Kerl, Head of Campaigning, Südwind

”

### WHAT CAN I DO?

MAKE SURE THE TIGER GROWS SOME TEETH AND SUPPORT INITIATIVES FOR A STRONG SUPPLY CHAIN LAW:

**JUSTICE IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS.**

### A MEANINGFUL SUPPLY CHAIN LAW INCLUDES:

#### Due diligence obligations

Companies must monitor their suppliers and consider how they can act against human rights violations, child labour, or other violations if founded.

#### Liability and access to justice

If an incident occurs, companies need to be held responsible. Victims need compensation and access to courts. It must be possible for a trade union in Bangladesh, for example, to take legal action in a European country.

#### Independent inspections

Checks and inspections on the situation of workers only make sense if they are carried out by independent institutions, not by the companies themselves as currently.

#### Human rights and environmental protection are inseparable

The supply chain problem always has a human rights and an environmental component.

## KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

[Clean Cloths Campaign](#) | [EU Supply Chain Law](#) | [Rana Plaza Arrangement](#)

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## **GREENWASHING**

### **ABUSING THE SUSTAINABILITY TREND**

Greenwashing is a marketing ploy which has recently been abused by many industries, including the fashion industry. When a company greenwashes, it is providing the false impression that it is environmentally friendly in its practices. The aim of this strategy is to deceive customers into believing that they are purchasing environment-friendly products, even if this is not the case. By giving the impression that the company is green in its production processes, a positive image is generated for the company, and this may result in an increase in sales. The result of greenwashing is that even if consumers wish to be ethical with their purchases and attempt to make informed decisions, it may still be considerably challenging to determine whether, in fact, the product they wish to buy is, indeed, environment-friendly.

Due to the increasing concerns with regards to the climate crisis, consumers are increasingly aware of the effects that a fashion company's production processes have on the environment. In response, companies are gradually shifting to sustainable processes and products to capitalise on the consumers' wish to minimise harmful environmental impacts caused by the industry. While this is not an inherently harmful trend, problems arise when companies take advantage of the consumers' genuine environmental concerns by giving the customer the false impression that the products they are buying are sustainable in nature. One example of greenwashing can be seen when a clothing brand advertises that a shirt is made from recycled materials or that the materials used to produce the shirt are recyclable. While this may be true, the company fails to mention that other processes carried out on the shirt, such as the addition of a graphic icon by means of a sticker actually renders the shirt non-recyclable. The company is not lying in its claim that the product is made of recyclable materials however, customers are still led to believe that the shirt is a more sustainable fashion choice.





In order to combat the growing issues of greenwashing, the ideal solution would be for companies to become transparent about their practices.

In fact, there are ways that greenwashing may be combatted from the customer side of the process. Education is the key! Educating oneself is the only barrier between making sustainable fashion choices and falling for the trap of greenwashing. By educating themselves, it will become significantly easier for customers to recognise the difference between a truly ethical fashion brand and a company which uses greenwashing in its marketing. Additionally, consumers are citizens too! They have the power to stop companies making misleading claims, eg by joining the worldwide movement of people to fight for a strong supply chain law!

One way of determining whether a fashion brand really is environmentally friendly is by looking for the standardised labels which are issued by reputable organisations. These labels are used to assure the customer that the products under the labels meet the required environmental and social criteria and have been subjected to independent verification.

We can become more aware of greenwashing in the fashion industry and take action to combat it! This can be achieved by pursuing appropriate education on sustainable practices, as well as keeping an eye open for trustworthy labels. By doing so, as well as by avoiding companies that engage in greenwashing, we are playing a vital role in building a healthier planet; not only for ourselves, but for generations to come. We also can demand from our governments to regulate companies' false claims.

*KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC*  
[Green Queen](#) | [Good on You](#)

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© Martin Bernetti

# WHAT DOES FASHION HAVE TO DO WITH CLIMATE?

## THE ADVERSE IMPACTS OF FAST FASHION ON CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Did you know that the fashion industry emits around 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions each year, which amounts to 1.2 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas? Indeed, the production of fabrics, clothing and the transport of its products are the main cause. The consequences of fast fashion on the environment are numerous and extremely harmful both to biodiversity and to humans. It is time to become aware of our ecological footprint.

### EXCESSIVE DRINKING WATER CONSUMPTION

Today, there are more than 150 billion textile products consumed annually. This leads to the misuse of raw materials such as water. According to the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME), more than 4% of the planet's water consumption is allocated to the textile industry.

For example, the manufacture of a single pair of jeans consumes 8000 litres, the equivalent of 207 showers. This material requires exposure to the sun for several months a year and a very large quantity of water. A study conducted by UNESCO shows that 10,000 liters of water are needed to produce 1 kg of cotton, of which 33% is drinking water.

4% of the drinking water available in the world is thus used to produce our clothes, which makes the textile sector the third largest consumer of water after the cultivation of wheat and rice.

CLICK ON THE WATER DROPS TO CHECK OUT THE CURRENT CONSUMPTION OF WATER IN COTTON PRODUCTION



## *COTTON: CONSUMER OF PESTICIDES AND CHEMICALS*

Water is not the only natural resource with deplorable consequences on the environment. Deforestation is intensifying day by day to supplement the need for vegetable textile fibers such as linen or cotton.

Cotton is the most consumed textile fibre in the world; highly sought out for its quality and absorbency, the cotton growing industry is the most polluting on the planet according to The World Counts.

In order to protect this resource from external dangers, a quarter of the pesticides used in the world are intended for this cotton culture which also requires the use of formaldehyde, derivatives of arsenic, and carcinogenic substances in the fabrics.

Indeed, brands aim to offer products at affordable prices to explode sales. To do this, they resort to environmentally damaging processes to intensify the production of raw materials by using pesticides and other chemicals in very large quantities. In addition to putting workers' health at risk, chemicals pollute the air, soil and water. The negative impact on the environment is exacerbated.

## *POLYESTER RELEASED DIRECTLY INTO WASTEWATER AND INTO OUR OCEANS*

The textile industry also exploits non-renewable resources to produce synthetic fibers such as polyester. 70% of these polyester fibers come from petroleum. With each wash, synthetic clothing releases billions of plastic micro-fibres so small that they are not filtered by wastewater treatment plants.

Every year, no less than 500,000 tons of plastic particles are directly discharged into wastewater and our oceans.



## INTENSIVE PRODUCTION OF WASTE

Between unsold items and pieces that are little worn or quickly worn out, the planetary waste caused by fast fashion is estimated at 4 million tonnes of textiles per year in Europe alone, reveals ADEME. Even so, recycling is not yet a reflex! 80% of clothes are simply thrown in the trash. At the world level, only 12% of the materials used for clothing are recycled, and recycled textiles currently represent only around 1% of the flow of textile materials used in the production of clothing.

In addition, clothes put in donation boxes or so-called recycling bins might end up in landfills in Sub-Saharan African countries such as Ghana, which are responsible for an environmental disaster there. Some 15 million used garments are shipped only to Accra, the capital of Ghana, out of which approximately 40% end up in a landfill.

In 2050, the textile sector would even emit 26% of global greenhouse gas emissions if current consumption trends continue according to ADEME. The World Bank estimates that by the same year, close to 143 million people could migrate due to the climate crisis. These migrations will be due to 60% of the rising waters in certain territories, rising waters which would ultimately make these territories uninhabitable.

With this mass consumption, the environmental footprint becomes alarming. According to data centers, the carbon impact and disruptions are such that an eco-responsible environmental approach must be adopted as soon as possible by stakeholders for the survival of the planet.

## WILDLIFE AND ANIMAL RESOURCES

Wildlife and animal resources are not spared by fast fashion either. There is a significant impact on the planet and its biodiversity. Heavily used in the textile industry, wool (from sheep, goats and alpacas), fur (from rabbits and minks), leather (from calves, cows or lambs) and silk are coveted. This comes at the cost of animal abuse and intensive farming.



**DEAD WHITE MAN'S  
CLOTHES?**

**CLICK HERE TO FIND  
OUT WHERE YOUR  
GARMENT DONATIONS  
MIGHT END UP.**

© BDSPN

## KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

Fast Fashion and Its Environmental Impact | UN Environment Programme  
ADEME Infographic (French)

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A man in a grey suit and sunglasses stands in the middle of a vast field of discarded plastic and fabric waste. The background shows a hazy landscape with mountains.

## WHAT ARE MY CLOTHES MADE OF? PROBLEMS WITH FASHION MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

© Halfpoint | iStock

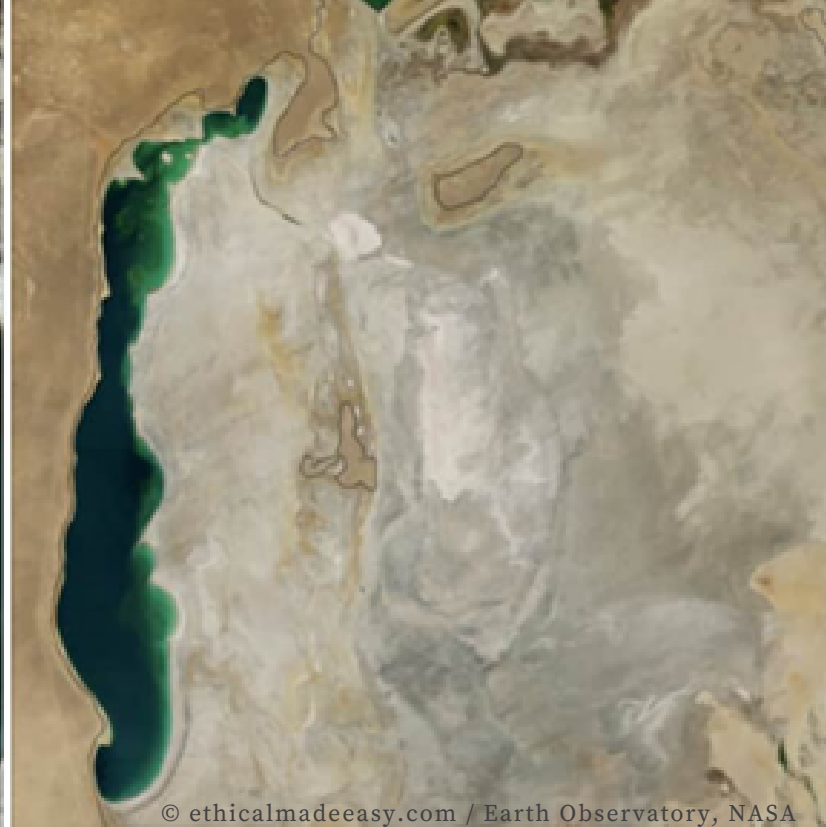
Now more than ever, people are becoming conscious of the impact their clothes have on the environment and are making an effort to shop responsibly.

### WHAT ABOUT THE MATERIALS?

Fashion is a great way to express yourself, but with the way many clothes are made, you might be endorsing something without even realizing it – environmental destruction.

The materials used to create fashion items often harm the environment. Some of the most common materials used in clothing, such as polyester, nylon, and acrylic, are petroleum-based plastics. These fabrics are not biodegradable and contain toxic chemicals like phthalates (as softeners). All of these contribute to harmful greenhouse gas emissions and microplastic pollution.





© ethicalmadeeasy.com / Earth Observatory, NASA

## DID YOU KNOW?

In Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, one of the world's biggest freshwater lakes has been experiencing drought due to the fashion industry demands. The lake Aral, located in Asia, was exploited by the Soviet Union to irrigate cotton fields in the area, causing its rapid drying up. The loss of the sea has led to unemployment and forced labor in the water-reliant villages, and the release of harmful chemicals from the dried seabed has caused widespread illnesses and cancers.

## BUT HOW IS THAT LINKED WITH THE FASHION INDUSTRY?

Most of the cotton grown in the general area of the lake is intended for use by the fast fashion industry, mainly in China and Bangladesh, enhancing the destructive situation. Despite that, 153 fashion brands have signed an agreement to never use the cotton from these areas to reduce the ecological consequences of its harvest.

Look for sustainable fashion materials such as organic cotton and plant-based materials such as linen, lyocell, bamboo and hemp. Natural fabrics like these are biodegradable and require less water, energy, and pesticides.

Organic cotton is one of the most popular materials in sustainable fashion, noted for being harvested without the use of toxic pesticides or synthetic fertilizers. In addition, organic cotton is hypoallergenic and light on the skin. Bamboo, which is a fast-growing grass, is naturally anti-bacterial and has a "luxury softness and comfort" while hemp, another hardy plant that requires little water, is both durable and breathable.

## WHAT ABOUT THE TECHNIQUES?

Finishing and dyeing are the most polluting and energy-intensive processes involved in making our clothes.

Finishing means chemicals or treatments are applied to a fabric – such as bleaching, softening or making it water resistant. Large amounts of water and chemicals are also used during dyeing.

Taking jeans as an example, to ensure their blue colour, the thread or fabric is repeatedly dunked in large vats of synthetic indigo dye. After dyeing, the denim is treated and washed with more chemicals to soften or texture it. Getting the faded or “worn in” look requires even more chemical bathing, which uses acids, enzymes, bleach and formaldehyde.

[CLICK HERE TO  
LEARN MORE  
ABOUT THE  
DYEING PROCESS!](#)



The rise in demand for sustainable fashion has resulted in a rise in niche retailers, specializing in eco-friendly alternatives. To date, there are several eco-friendly brands that have been set up as alternatives to conventional fashion.

There are several fairtrade brands and also various retail brands that have joined the sustainability bandwagon, offering eco-friendly alternatives to their regular collections.

A sustainable dying process is a technique which has been embraced by eco-fashion designers. Natural dyes, such as indigo and madder, driven from plants and vegetables, can be used to give garments a unique and sustainable colour. Furthermore, many eco-fashion designers are opting for the use of non-toxic dyes to reduce the environmental impact of dyeing processes.

Another sustainable technique is upcycling, which involves taking old, used clothes and transforming them into something new and fresh. This can include repurposing pieces of clothing into patchwork quilts, blankets, bags, or even accessories, without having to use any new materials.

### KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

[Fast Fashion and Its Environmental Impact | UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion | 5 ways shopping can become more sustainable](#)

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## ANIMAL ETHICS

### IS THERE ANIMAL SUFFERING IN MY CLOTHING?

Animal ethics and ethical luxury are two terms which always surface during discussions about the fashion industry. Ethical luxury refers to the sustainable and ethical production of clothing. Unlike garments produced in the fast fashion industry, the products of ethical luxury are durable and long-lasting, giving them a high environmental and aesthetic value. Animal ethics, on the other hand, revolves around the ethical treatment of animals during the production of clothing.

Animal products like sheep wool or leather have traditionally been used for clothing materials all over the world. With fast fashion, also animal products like leather, fur, silk and Merino wool are used for mass production. Especially silk, Merino wool or fur are regarded as high value products. Driven by the "cheap cost for higher profit" approach the intensive mass animal farming leaves animals in painful living conditions. Large-scale productions of clothing products often provide dismal living conditions for the animals providing the organic materials to be used. There are many examples of how animals are mistreated for clothing production. One of which is the mulesing procedure, practiced in Australia, which involves the cutting of flaps of skin from sheep, resulting in considerable yet unnecessary pain for the animals. One other example of mistreatment of animals is found in the silk industry, as silkworms are killed in masses during the production process.

The marketing of garments made of animal products hardly ever shows the process involved in creating the clothing made of animal products, as the more gory details of the process are skipped over. For this reason, consumers are often unaware of the implications of the purchase of clothes made from animal products. Furthermore, garments made from animal products tend to be more appealing to the customer, for aesthetical and durability reasons. This aspect of the clothing often encourages consumers to overlook the conditions that the animals involved in the process were put through.

OUR  
RECOMMENDATION:

SLAY  
THE FILM THAT GETS  
UNDER FASHION'S  
SKIN

There are now numerous options available for a consumer wishing to purchase clothing which did not involve to harm animals. Therefore, one may opt for brands which are certified cruelty-free or for brands which do not use animal products in their garments. The difference between these two types of brands is crucial when making a decision on which industry to support.

Cruelty-free brands do not explicitly avoid animal products, but rather ensure that any materials used were not extracted at the expense of the animals' comfort. Taking the mulesing practice, for example, an ethical brand would ensure that the wool used did not come from sheep which fell victim to this practice. Besides the cruelty-free brands, the consumer may also opt for brands which completely avoid the use of animal products. In essence, by purchasing clothing from such a brand, the consumer can be sure that no animals were harmed for the materials used to produce the item of clothing bought.



### KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

[The Use of Animals in the Fashion Industry](#) | [Good on You](#)

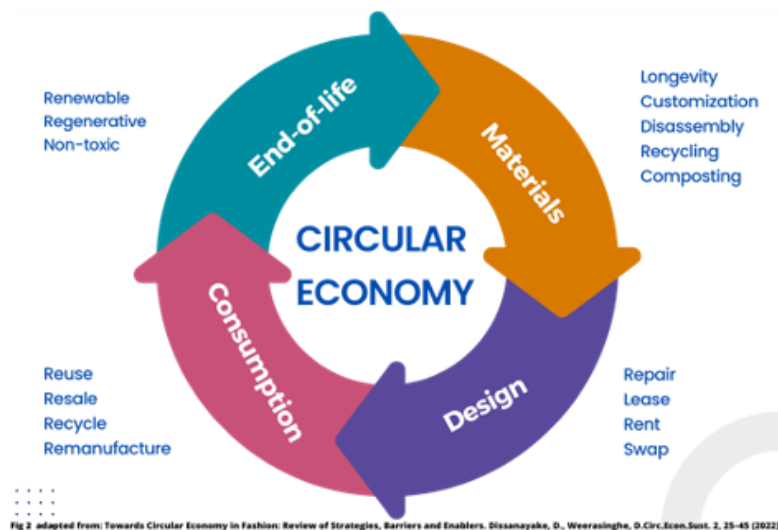
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# A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC SYSTEM? HOW CIRCULAR ECONOMY MODELS AIM TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE IN FASHION

Circular economy models aim to create positive change in the fashion industry by minimising waste and maximising resources. This is opposed to the linear model which takes a 'take, make, dispose' approach. In a circular economy, clothes are designed to last longer, be easy to repair and recycle, and are made from natural materials.

There are many benefits of following a circular economy model when it comes to fashion. For starters, it reduces waste as clothes are designed to be reused or recycled instead of being thrown away after just one season. It also helps protect our environment as natural materials biodegrade much faster than synthetic ones like polyester. Finally, it supports Fairtrade practices as workers are paid fairly for their labour and receive better working conditions.



WATCH THIS  
VIDEO TO LEARN  
MORE ABOUT  
CIRCULAR  
ECONOMY

[Fashion Industry & Circular Economy](#)  
by [WorldDynamics](#)

The fast fashion industry is currently responsible for massive amounts of pollution and wastefulness due largely to its unsustainable business model which encourages consumers to buy new clothes constantly rather than investing in long-lasting garments. In contrast, circular economy models focus on creating value throughout an item's lifecycle – from design and production all the way through use and reuse – ultimately leading to less waste overall. While some may see eco-fashion as expensive or inconvenient, making small changes like supporting brands with circular economies can have a big impact on both individuals' carbon footprints and on the planet as a whole.

## KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

[The Unsustainable Nature of the Fast Fashion Industry](#) | [Towards Circular Economy in Fashion](#) | [Recycling Fashion](#)



## SO CAN SUSTAINABLE FASHION HAVE POSITIVE EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY?

Sustainable fashion, is a movement towards designing, producing, and selling clothing and accessories in an environmentally and socially responsible way. There are a number of ways in which eco-fashion can impact economic growth:

**Job creation:** The eco-fashion industry can create jobs in a variety of sectors, including design, production, and retail as well as in related industries such as sustainable agriculture and textiles.

**Increased competitiveness:** Eco-fashion can help companies to differentiate themselves in the market and potentially gain a competitive advantage. The focus on quality and durability can lead to increased consumer spending on clothing, as people are willing to pay more for well-made, long-lasting items.

**Increased consumer demand:** As awareness of the environmental and social impacts of fashion grows, there is increasing demand for eco-friendly products. The emphasis on ethical production can lead to increased demand for goods produced in a sustainable and socially responsible manner. This can drive sales and revenue for companies in the eco-fashion industry.

**Economic development:** Slow fashion can boost the growth of small and medium-sized businesses that specialize in these types of goods. Eco-fashion can also contribute to economic development in developing countries by creating jobs and increasing local production while respecting the principles of fair trade.

**Innovation:** The growth of the eco-fashion industry may also lead to the development of new technologies and innovations in the field, which can have a broader impact on the economy through the creation of new intellectual property and the potential for exporting these technologies to other countries.



### KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

[Slowing the Fast Fashion Industry](#) | [Clothes Swapping](#) | [Discover the Circular Economy](#)

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**ARE WE CONSUMERS OR HUMAN?  
HOW YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS WILL GROW  
WHEN CARING ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY**

**Developing a deeper understanding of the environmental impact and human rights aspects of fashion.**

As you learn more about sustainable fashion, you may become more aware of the environmental and human rights surrounding the fashion industry and be motivated to make more environmentally and socially responsible choices in your own life. If you commit to buying second-hand and Fairtrade products, this can have a positive impact on the lives of farmers and workers who produce the goods. Fairtrade certification ensures that these individuals receive a fair wage for their work and that they work in safe and healthy conditions.

In addition, Fairtrade practices often promote sustainable farming methods and support community development projects. By choosing to buy Fairtrade products, consumers can help empower marginalized communities and promote social and economic justice.

**Building new skills and knowledge.**

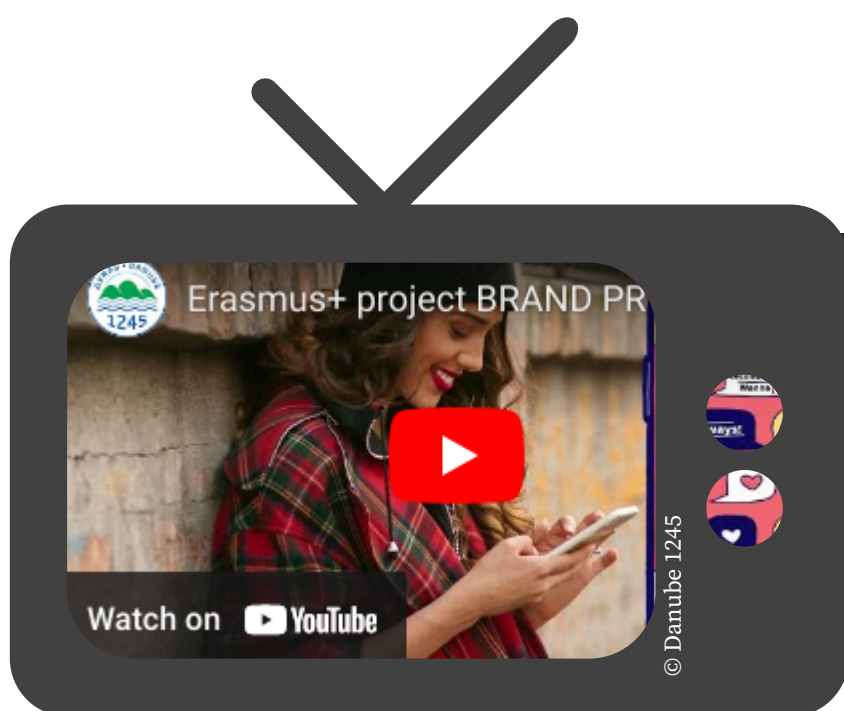
Following sustainability may involve learning about new materials, production processes, and design techniques. This can help you develop new skills and knowledge that you can use in your personal and professional life. For instance, you can learn how to research and evaluate the sustainability of different clothing brands and products, and understand proper garment care in order to extend the life of clothing. As an example, you may learn how to properly launder, mend and alter garments, thereby developing skills such as sewing, knitting and upcycling.

## Experiencing a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment.

Making a commitment to eco-fashion sustainability can be a meaningful and fulfilling experience. By taking steps to reduce your fashion-related environmental impact and support more sustainable fashion brands, you can feel proud of the positive difference you are making. Moreover, you can become an advocate for sustainable fashion and raise awareness about the importance of sustainable fashion practices. In this way, you may be a role model for others in your community by showing that it is possible to make sustainable fashion choices. Making choices that align with your personal values can contribute to living a more authentic and fulfilling life.

## Connecting with like-minded individuals.

As you engage with sustainable fashion, you may have the opportunity to connect with other individuals who share your values and interests. This can be a rewarding experience that helps you feel more connected and supported in your efforts. Building a network of people who are interested in sustainable fashion can open up opportunities for collaboration and partnerships, and create a sense of community and belonging. Moreover, sharing information and resources can help to deepen your understanding of sustainable fashion practices and learn from the experiences of others.



**BE AWARE,  
BE RESPONSIBLE,  
TAKE ACTION**

### KEY RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

[The Dirty Truth of Fast Fashion](#) | [DIY Clothes Makeover](#) | [How to Spot Greenwashing](#)

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# PART 2: BE PREPARED... TO MAKE A CHANGE!

You now know the negative effects of the fashion industry on the environment and the climate. You are now also aware of the human rights situation of the people who produce our clothes. But what can you do? Are you feeling overwhelmed and powerless?

Don't be!

Your actions can make all the difference!

## CHANGE THE SYSTEM

GET TO KNOW HOW YOU CAN  
START YOUR OWN CAMPAIGN,  
AND PUT PRESSURE ON  
BRANDS

[CLICK HERE](#)

## INSPIRE YOUR FRIENDS

FIND SOME CREATIVE AND  
AFFORDABLE WAYS TO CARRY THE  
IDEA OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION  
FORWARD TOGETHER WITH YOUR  
FRIENDS

[CLICK HERE](#)

## FIND YOUR OWN STYLE

WANT SOME HELP IN INTEGRATING  
SUSTAINABILITY IN YOUR OWN FASHION  
CHOICES?

[CLICK HERE](#)

**FIND YOUR OWN STYLE**  
**HERE IS SOME HELP IN INTEGRATING**  
**SUSTAINABILITY IN YOUR OWN FASHION CHOICES!**

THE BUYERARCHY OF NEEDS  
ORIENTATION IN THE LABYRINTH OF LABELS  
VISIBLE MENDING  
DIY LAUNDRY DETERGENT  
FIND YOUR FAVORITE SUSTAINABLE BRAND





# GET READY WITH ME - SUSTAINABILITY EDITION THE BUYERARCHY OF NEEDS

© Canva

It's Friday evening, and you're getting ready to meet up with your friends. As usual, you peek into your closet and try to decide what to wear. "What should I wear? There is nothing good in here. Do I need something new?" you think. It's so hard to be fashionable and sustainable at the same time, isn't it? Well, the answer is no. There are unlimited ways to be stylish and keep your carbon footprint as low as possible. Who cares about the (often weekly) new trends when you can simply work with what you have and become an eco-conscious style icon, or switch it up by trying out other sustainable options? So, let's see...

Most importantly, take a look at your closet - and try to **work with what you have**. You could try to put on different patterns, tie a blouse differently, or rework a shirt into a cropped top. Another option would be to **borrow clothes** from family or friends. They might have something in their closet that would work perfectly for you and your plans. In order to switch it up a bit, you and your friends and family could go through each other's wardrobes and do a little **clothes-swapping party**. This would be a fun way to get together and get rid of pre-loved clothes and find new pieces that you like better. While this proposed clothes-swapping and borrowing actions is a completely free activity, the following steps may require some more financial investment.

In nearly every city worldwide, you're able to find local **thrift stores**. There, you can spot second-hand or even vintage pieces. Thrifting is a great way to keep your environmental footprint low while finding and acquiring unique clothes for relatively low prices that you wouldn't find elsewhere.

You could also try to **make your own clothes**. By doing so, try to buy sustainable garments at your local fabric store and keep garment-leftovers as low as possible. Lastly, and highest on the pyramid of needs, you can buy something new. This is the least sustainable of the six options. If you decide to buy new and have the financial resources, try to **buy fair products** and research sustainable fashion businesses. Keep an eye out for labels and **certificates** such as Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) or World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) in order to make sure that these companies actually work ethically and sustainably.



THE BUYERARCHY  
of NEEDS  
(with apologies  
to Maslow)

© Sarah Lazarovic

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Do you care about the environment and fair treatment of workers in the fashion industry? Which labels are trustworthy and which appear to be a greenwashing scam? Figuring out which clothes are actually eco-friendly and fair can be tough. With so many organisations out there, it can feel like a labyrinth of labels. But don't worry, we've got you covered. Here you will find an overview of the most important quality labels for social and ecological sustainability in the clothing industry.

In most cases, labels only refer to certain aspects of the textile production chain and forget about other important factors. For example, a garment may be produced in an ecologically sustainable way but the workers didn't receive a fair wage - or vice versa. The following overview provides a quick glimpse into whether a label focuses on ecological or social standards, or incorporates criteria for both. It also shows those steps in the production chain that are covered by the label (e.g. only the production of raw materials).



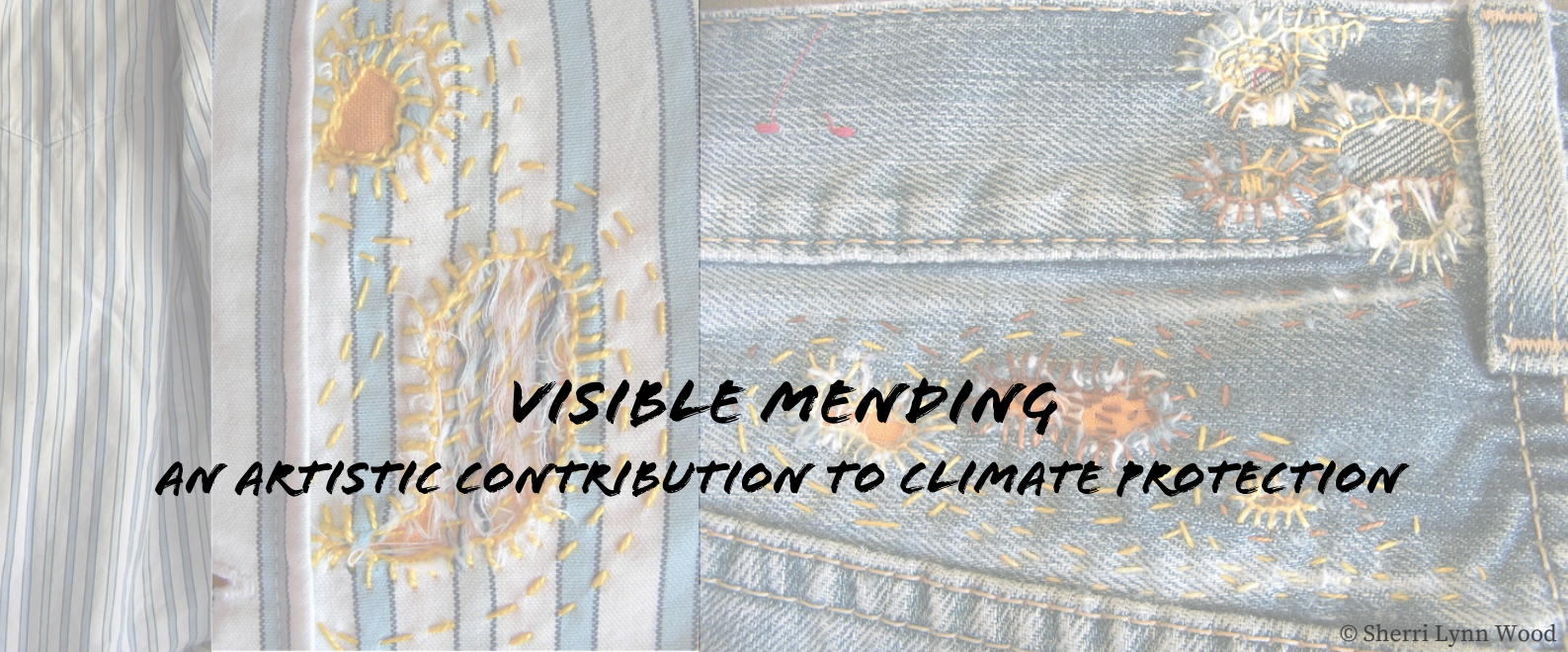
Labelchecker (in German)



Spot eco-friendly clothing: Certified Fashion

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# VISIBLE MENDING

## AN ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTION TO CLIMATE PROTECTION

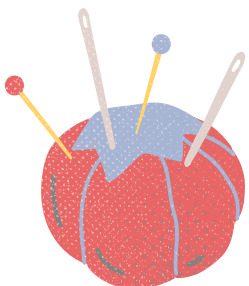
© Sherri Lynn Wood

“Visible Mending” refers to the creative repair of clothing by hand using simple stitching and darning techniques to fix holes, tears, or stains. This extends the life of the clothing and also makes a fashion statement for climate protection! Instead of throwing away damaged clothing, we can use textile techniques such as darning, stitching, and embroidery to ensure they can still be used.

Damaged clothing does not have to end up in the trash – we can simply extend its lifespan. In this video, you will learn how to upgrade your clothes with these simple techniques.

HERE YOU CAN FIND SOME VIDEOS THAT EXPLAIN THE TECHNIQUE OF VISIBLE MENDING IN A SIMPLE AND UNDERSTANDABLE WAY:

- [Visible mending brings new life to old damaged clothes](#)
- [Visible Mending: 10 Basic Principles to Get You Started Mending Your Clothes](#)
- [Visible Mending 101: How to Extend the Life of Your Wardrobe](#)



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# DIY LAUNDRY DETERGENT: A FUN AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION FOR YOUR LAUNDRY NEEDS

Many people are looking for ways to live a more sustainable lifestyle, and making your own laundry detergent is one of the easiest ways of doing so. Not only is this good for the environment, it can also save you money in the long run. Homemade laundry detergent is made from natural ingredients that are easy to find and safe to use. Most store-bought detergents contain harmful chemicals that are not only bad for the environment, but can also be harmful to your health. By making your own detergent, you can be sure that you are not contributing to the pollution of the environment or exposing yourself and your family to harmful chemicals.

Another advantage of making your own laundry detergent is that it can be a fun and rewarding experience. You can experiment with different scents and combinations of ingredients to find the best formula that works for you. Plus, you can feel proud of your contribution to a cleaner and healthier planet.

In addition, making your own laundry detergent is much cheaper than buying it from the store. Commercial laundry detergents can be expensive, especially if you have a large family or do a lot of laundry. By making your own detergent, you can save money and reduce waste by using ingredients that come in bulk or by selecting products that come in recyclable packaging.

In conclusion, making your own laundry detergent is a sustainable and easy way to reduce your impact on the environment while saving money and having fun. So why not give it a try?

## Take a look at this “laundry recipe” by Smarticular!

Ingredients for two liters of detergent:



40g washing soda (about 4 tablespoons)



30g finely grated curd soap (about 7 tablespoons; also available without palm oil)



A few drops of essential oil (optional for fragrance)

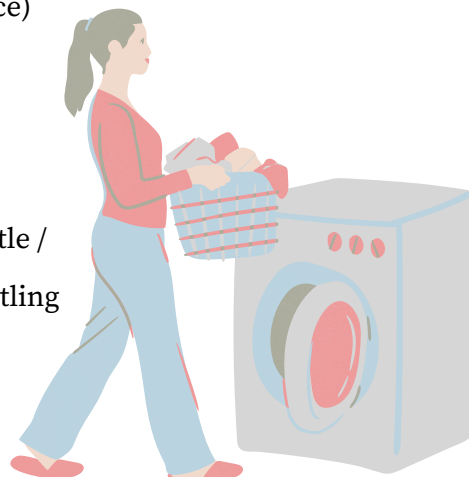


2L of water



Large bowl (resistant to boiling water) or pot bottle / canister for storage if necessary, a funnel for bottling

FIND THIS RECIPE AND  
MORE SIMPLE TIPS  
FOR SUSTAINABLE  
LIVING HERE:  
[SMARTICULAR.NET](http://SMARTICULAR.NET)



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MY BRAND IS  
SECOND HAND

## FIND YOUR FAVORITE SUSTAINABLE BRAND

© Dogdays of Summer | Second-hand store in Graz

*HERE IS HOW YOU COULD GET THE DISCUSSION AROUND FAIR FASHION STARTED*



Set a countdown for 1-2 minutes and ask the youths, who should be split up in groups of three to four, to write down as many brands they can think of within that time.



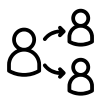
Now raise the question: Which brand in your list is producing in an eco-friendly and fair way? Give them about 20 minutes to research and choose two or three brands from the list which they think they are sustainable.



After some time, ask each group to present their findings and to explain what made them choose those brands.



Encourage the group to share their views and have a healthy discussion.



Use this as an opportunity to share some info about greenwashing and certificates that guarantee fairness in the supply chain of clothes. Also talk about sustainable practices, for instance, the advantages of buying pre-loved items, renting designer clothing or swapping clothes.



Share with them some affordable brands, stores that sell Fairtrade fashion, as well as selected second-hand shops and online platforms.



Encourage the group to research further and share their findings, so that they can have a more informed opinion.

**CHECK IF YOUR FAVORITE  
BRAND PRODUCES FAIR!**

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# INSPIRE YOUR FRIENDS

HERE ARE SOME CREATIVE WAYS TO CARRY THE  
IDEA OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION FORWARD WITH A  
GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE!

PRE-LOVED FASHION SHOW

REUSE THE TREASURES OF YOUR GRANNY'S WARDROBE

HOW TO ORGANIZE A SEWING CAFÉ

UPCYCLING WORKSHOP

FASHION BLACK STORIES

MEET ME AT THE LAUNDROMAT

DRAMA, BABY, DRAMA!

TREASURE HUNTING FOR ETHICAL STORES





## PRE-LOVED FASHION SHOW

© iStock

One of the most sustainable ways for being fashionable is to purchase second-hand clothing. Thrift stores across Europe are a great place for young people to find quality pieces with vintage touches at a low cost.

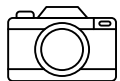
This strategy reduces consumption, as items are saved from going to landfills, while the purchaser attains high-quality and often unique garments.

Here is how you can encourage youths to purchase second-hand clothing and become more environmentally conscious about their fashion choices:

Organize enough good quality second-hand clothing - sources of this clothing could be yourself, your family, or second-hand stores. Distribute the pieces among young people or place them on hangers and shelves in the room or park in an attractive way.

Now, encourage youths to style their own looks out of these pieces.

Ask them to look for creative combinations and encourage them to confidently strut the runway!



Take pictures of the looks at the end of the show and share them on social media, to illustrate the sustainability benefits of purchasing second-hand clothing.



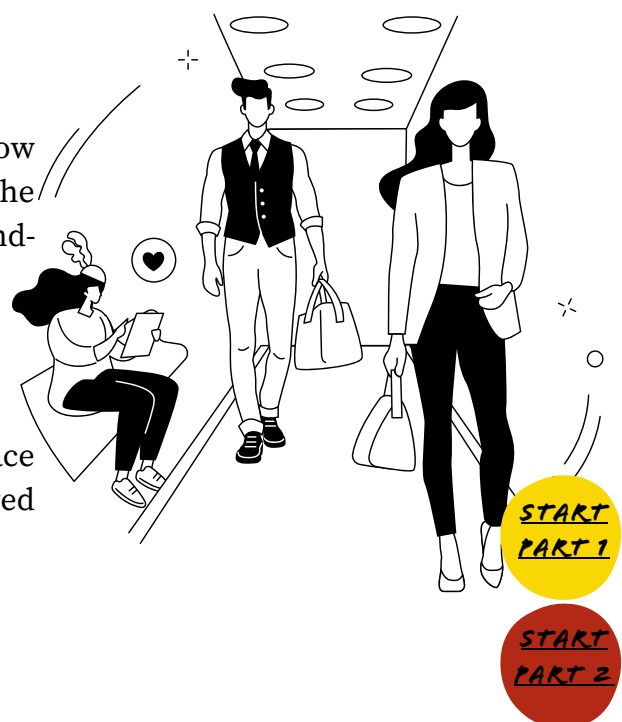
You can do this with any group size.



You need a comfortable indoor or outdoor space and a large selection of attractive pre-loved clothes.



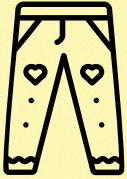
This activity should last roughly an hour.





# REUSE THE TREASURES OF YOUR GRANNY'S WARDROBE

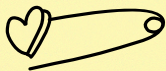
Gather together as a group of around 5-15 people



Each person should bring about 5 old but really extraordinary pieces of clothes, accessories, jewellery, textiles etc.

Be creative with where you look for such treasures: Check out your family's attic (don't forget to make sure that you are allowed to reuse what you find), ask your neighbour or go to a flea market!

Everyone should place their pieces on a large table in the middle of the room.



Together, take a look at all the rarities and come up with creative ideas on how to reuse them!

Share the story behind the garments you brought! Do you know who owned it before? When did the person wear it? Did it have a certain function? Any memory you want to share?

You can either swap garments and make sure the new owner really cares and appreciates the new item or you can go back with your own stuff, taking with you a whole load of good ideas for what to do with them!

If you have enough time, you can already start to rearrange, cut, trap, bind,...!

*A WORKERS' SUIT...  
MIGHT BE A BEAUTIFUL JUMPSUIT WITH THE RIGHT BELT.*

*THE SWEATER YOUR FATHER WORE IN THE 80S...  
MIGHT BECOME YOUR FRIEND'S DRESS.*

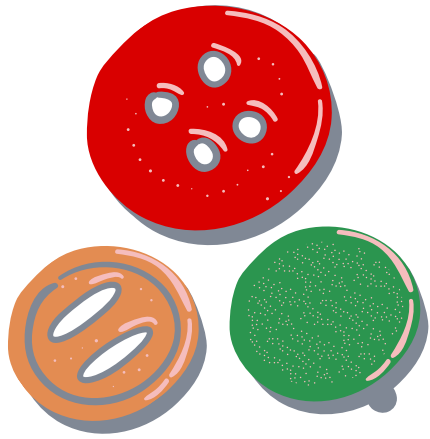
*THE OLD-FASHIONED PILLOWCASE...  
ALWAYS WANTED TO BECOME A SHIRT.*

*AND THE COLOURFUL SKIRT YOUR GRANNY ALWAYS WORE...  
LIVES ON AS A STYLISH CAPE.*

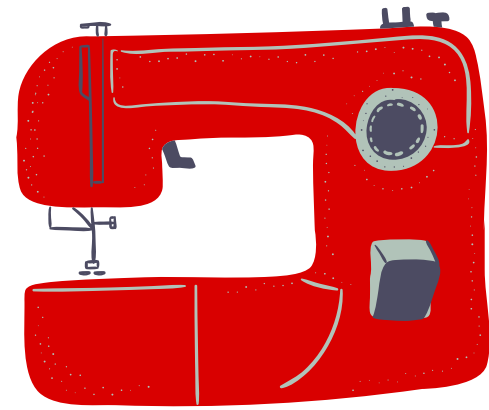
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## HOW TO ORGANIZE A SEWING CAFÉ



Sewing and do-it-yourself (DIY) are becoming popular again, but many people, especially younger generations, are losing the ability to sew and fix their own clothes. In our fast fashion culture, it doesn't seem like there's much benefit to being handy with a needle and thread. Unfortunately, this means that younger people aren't learning the skills that older generations took for granted. Additionally, many people don't have the time or motivation to whip out their sewing machines and be creative.

However, sewing is a great way to make clothes last longer and reduce waste. By repairing clothes and creating your own reusable textile products, you can help the environment and save money. So, even though it may seem like a chore at first, learning to sew is a valuable skill that can have a big impact in the long run.

The Sewing Café can be compared to a repair café, where people can help each other with small sewing projects. It's a relaxed gathering where you can have fun and learn from each other while sewing. You don't have to create anything complicated, just fix small problems with your clothes, such as shortening pants or fixing tears. You can also upcycle old clothes and turn them into something new and useful, like turning a T-shirt into a colourful gift bag, a towel into washable make-up removal pads or an old dress into cloth napkins. The event is usually free and everyone brings their own sewing machine, fabric and tools.

The most important thing is to have fun, gain confidence in your sewing skills and meet new friends who share your interests. If participants want to learn more, they can organize a special workshop with an expert. This event can even be a start to a regular sewing café, where you can keep learning and creating with your friends.

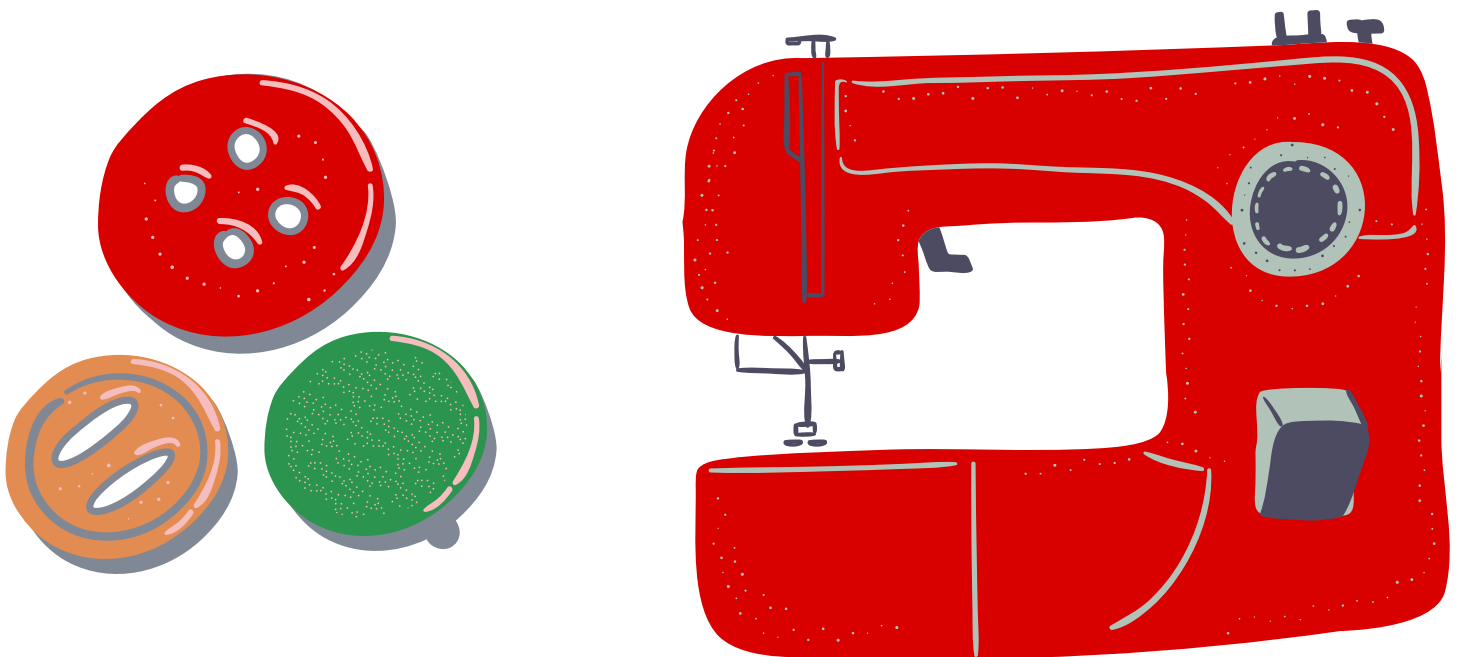
“

I like to come to the sewing café, because I can spend time in nice company for my favourite hobby - sewing. While repairing or altering textiles, we exchanged ideas about ways to be more mindful of the environment in everyday life and thus pay attention to a sustainable way of living." (Quote by Verena, translated from German)

”

To make it easier for more people to join, it's a good idea to have a consistent schedule, an example of which could be to meet on the first Saturday morning of every month. It's also a good idea to host the event for approximately three to four hours so that participants can finish smaller projects and repairs on-site. Bringing snacks, coffee or tea isn't necessary, but it can make the event more comfortable. You can also have sewing books, instruction manuals, and sample pieces on display for inspiration.

Make sure to have enough tables, chairs, power outlets and extension cords. The goal is that a group of people of all ages will develop and become regulars.














## TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUR SEWING CAFÉ



-  Meet regularly (for example once a month)
-  Create a cozy atmosphere with drinks and snacks
-  Bring examples of successful upcycling and/or repair projects for inspiration
-  Make sure that participants have basic knowledge of using the sewing machine/sewing with needle and thread
-  Provide sewing machines, an ironing board, an iron, needles, mending fabrics, scissors, etc., especially if participants are not able to bring these things with them
-  Announce the event well in advance so that participants can gather broken or upcycled clothing
-  Allow enough time for the meetings, approximately 3-4 hours

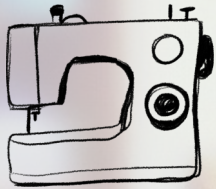
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# UPCYCLING WORKSHOP

Utilizing fabric pieces and buttons from old clothing items to create something new is another way to make use of items that have already been produced. Introduce youths to upcycling as a creative way to incorporate sustainability into your look!

## WHAT YOU SHOULD OFFER:



at least one sewing machine and somebody who knows how to work on it!



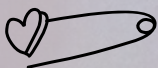
enough tailor scissors, measuring tape, and tailor's chalk



a variety of fabrics or fabric scraps in different looks or from different countries



an iron and ironing board



sewing needles, pins, embroidery needles, colourful yarn and thread



buttons, fabric colours, lace, brooches, ribbons, iron-on pictures...



# UPCYCLING WORKSHOP

Each person should bring 1-3 pieces of clothing that they love but wish to upcycle  
- Clothes that they love but that are already slightly worn down, clothes that they find a bit too boring but fit well, or clothes with beautiful fabric but with a less appealing cut...

Additionally, bring a variety of old clothes in different sizes or very simple t-shirts, sweaters or bags, so that those who forgot their own clothes or want to join the workshop spontaneously can also work on something!

Bring some examples of beautifully and meaningful upcycled garments, bags, and so on!

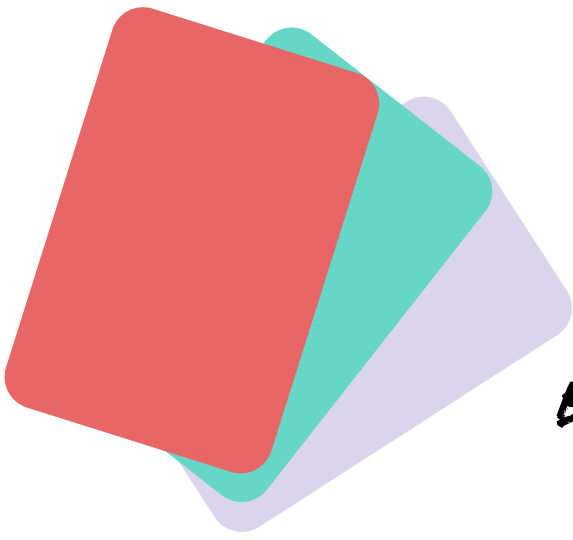
Choose a space that is large enough and has a creative atmosphere. You need a large table for all materials and separate tables for people to work on.

1. Begin by showing the youths a range of upcycled clothing to give them ideas and inspiration for making their own.
2. Encourage the youths to come up with ideas for upcycling their own clothes and to sketch out their designs.
3. Group the youths into small teams and let them select 1-2 items of clothing each to upcycle.
4. Encourage the youths to think outside the box and be creative with their designs, while also ensuring they are practical and wearable.
5. Help the youths to choose their fabrics and to cut them to the right length, using tape to hold it in the right shape.
6. Allow the youths to take their time to learn how to use the thread and needle, or help them with the sewing machine to achieve the finished look of their upcycled pieces.
7. At the end, encourage the youths to display and show off their new creations!
8. You could give awards for the best creations as recognition for their work.

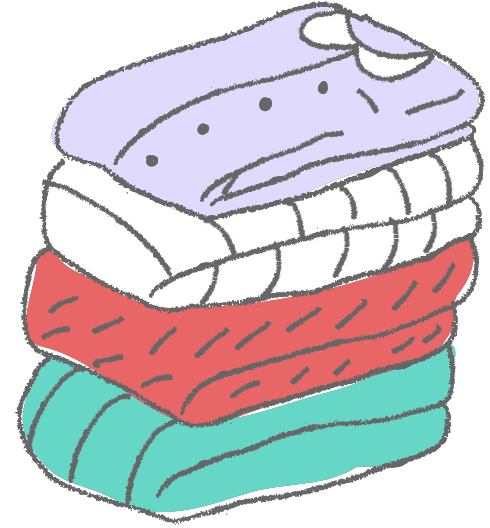
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## FASHION BLACK STORIES



We will introduce to you a game that sheds light on the grievances in the fast fashion industry and the everyday experiences of fashion workers. The game can be played with both big and small groups.

Game instructions: The cards are placed in a pile on a table with the "facts" facing up. One player must be chosen as the game leader. This player reads out the fact on the top card. Only the game leader may now read the answer (story) on the back. Meanwhile, the guessing team can start asking the leader questions about the story. These must be answered with a "YES" or "NO". If a "wrong question" comes up, the game leader must point out that it is not a valid question and should therefore be "rearranged". The game ends only when the fact to be guessed has been accurately described. This may take some time.

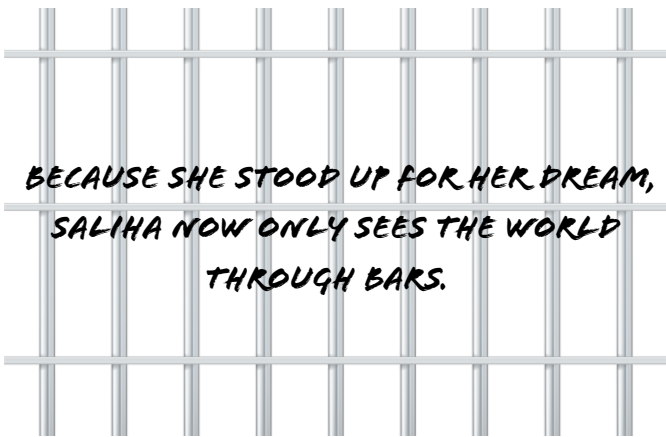
Below is an example which can give you a better understanding of the game. This example is called "The Suitcase".

**FACT:** A woman opened her suitcase.  
When she found a dead man inside, she  
took her own life.

**STORY:** The dead man was her boyfriend. She hid him  
in the suitcase because he didn't get an exit permit  
from his home country. Unfortunately, the heating in  
the cargo hold had failed and he froze to death.



Print out the following two pages double-sided and cut along the markings



BECAUSE SHE STOOD UP FOR HER DREAM,  
SALIHA NOW ONLY SEES THE WORLD  
THROUGH BARS.



AFTER ROKEYA LOOKED AT THE  
WALL, SHE NO LONGER WANTED  
TO GO TO WORK.



front page

front page



LIAN'S HANDS ARE SHEDDING  
SKIN FOR THE THIRD TIME.



USUALLY THE VERMIN DIES.  
THIS TIME IT GOT RAVINDER.

front page

front page



Rokeya works in a textile factory in Bangladesh. When she sees cracks in the wall, she remembers the collapse of Rana Plaza, an 8-story factory building near the capital, which collapsed in 2013. More than 1000 workers were killed and about 2500 were injured. She also remembers that workers were worried about cracks in the walls the day before the collapse, but had to continue working anyway.

Information: Rana Plaza was not an individual case, accidents often happen in factories, fires... Other safety precautions are also insufficiently taken, so that employees are forced to work in a dangerous environment and, on top of that, are very poorly paid for it. Since 1990, at least 2,200 textile workers have been killed and thousands more have been injured in at least 300 safety incidents in Bangladesh.

Saliha worked as a seamstress in a textile factory in Bangladesh. She dreamed of being able to rent a small apartment with her salary and to send her two children Rafi and Bibha to school. However, she only earned around €80 (as of 2019) per month and could not fulfil this wish. Together with other female workers, she joined forces and founded a trade union. They wanted to stand up collectively against the factory owners and to demand fair wages. During a demonstration, Saliha was arrested and has been in prison ever since.

Information: The minimum wage in Bangladesh is currently about €80. Unions are demanding twice that amount. The subsistence wage is calculated at about €400, so the minimum wage paid is one-fifth of the subsistence wage. In comparison, in China the legal minimum wage is almost 50% of the living wage. Those who attempt to take a stand against these circumstances have a hard time in Bangladesh. It is difficult to form trade unions and to get involved. Freedom of assembly is severely restricted and demonstrations are often broken up by force.

back page

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Ravinder killed himself with a lethal dose of the pesticides he normally used on his cotton field. He was a cotton farmer in a village in eastern India. To get the cotton seeds from big companies, he had to go into heavy debt. Genetically modified seeds are more prone to pests, so he also needed the appropriate pesticides and poisons from these companies. Ravinder depended on the success of the cotton harvest in order to repay his debts. After the last harvests were unsuccessful, he was so desperate that he used the poison for himself.

Information: Most cotton farmers in India are dependent on large companies that sell seeds and pesticides. The seeds are mostly genetically modified and therefore need a lot of pesticides. In addition, the seeds cannot be reused the next year. This puts farmers in a long-lasting dependency. Thus, suicides are common among cotton farmers. Between 1995 and 2005, there have been approximately 150,000 suicide cases among farmers. Cotton farmers are the most affected due to their dependency on the cotton market. One way to escape this would be to grow other crops, fruits and vegetables. In some regions where this is common, there are hardly any suicides.

Lian is 35 years old and works in a Chinese sports shoe factory. There, workers toil away at piecework, performing the same steps over and over again. Lian's job is to glue the soles of the shoes to the finished upper shoe. The glue Lian uses is toxic. He and his colleagues do not wear gloves because they interfere with his work and slow down his productivity. Lian is not paid for the hours he works, but is paid for every shoe completed. During gluing, pressure is constantly applied to the same areas of the hands. As a result, calluses form and the skin begins to peel. With a 12-hour workday and 6 workdays a week, the wounds cannot heal and Lian's skin comes off his hands for the third time.

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Who knows what all the laundry care icons in a shirt or trousers actually mean? Learning how to wash and care for garments is essential to extending their lifetime.

With a group of about five to ten youths, you could go to a laundromat or any other place with access to washing machines. Each person should bring their favourite clothing items. Additionally, prepare different articles of clothing in various fabrics. Bring some eco-friendly or even hand-made laundry detergent.

- Read the labels together, discuss and check what they mean
- Sort clothes by colour, material and type
- Put the clothes in the washing machine

The waiting time is a great opportunity to talk about all kinds of topics!

If you don't have access to washing machines or if you are looking for an easier way to learn how to care for garments, you could just check and discuss the labels of the clothes that youths are wearing. You could also discuss the issue during a clothes swap party or a pre-loved fashion show.

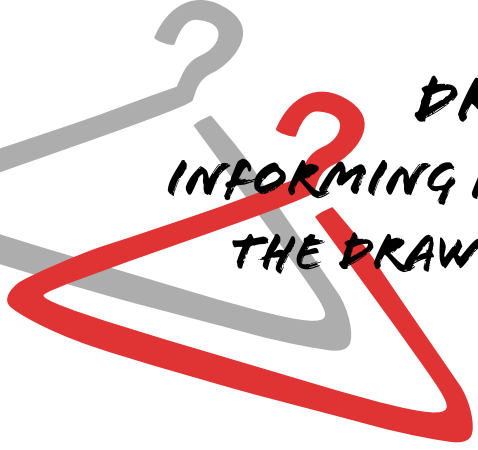
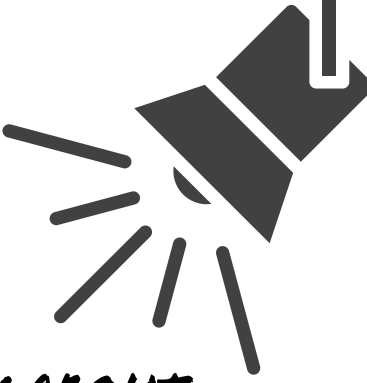


### ...SOME GENERAL TIPS FOR WASHING YOUR CLOTHS

- Rather wash with a lower temperature than indicated - most of the times if a label says e.g. 60°, staying at 40° is enough to get your piece of cloth perfectly clean!
- Hang-dry your clothes - only use the dryer if necessary and use it on a low heat setting
- Use a gentle cycle or delicate setting
- Carefully try spot-treating smaller stains before tossing the clothes in the wash
- Avoid using fabric softeners or bleach

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# **DRAMA, BABY, DRAMA!**

## **INFORMING PEOPLE IN A THEATRICAL WAY ABOUT THE DRAWBACKS OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY**

Do you actually know how your clothes are produced? Fashion companies are making millions in profits. However, factory workers and members of the supply chain are deprived of wages, and many can barely feed themselves and their families with the money they are paid.

At a street festival in Graz/Austria, young activists from the NGO Südwind presented the working conditions in the global garment industry with the help of a short play and acted out the grievances in the garment supply chain.

The Südwind activists demand that companies take responsibility for their negligence and eliminate grievances. They are fighting for clean supply chains so that we no longer have to wear "dirty" clothes.








**[CLICK HERE  
TO WATCH  
THE VIDEO OF  
THE CAMPAIGN](#)**

You might be inspired to put on your own little play in your city to campaign for better conditions in the textile industry!



# TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUR NEXT PERFORMANCE



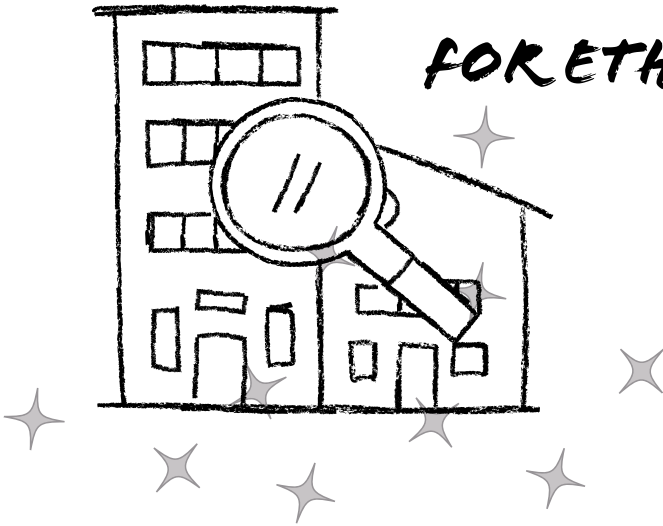
-  Plan enough time for preparations and rehearsals.
-  Inform yourself about possible requirements/necessary permissions for events in public spaces in your city.
-  The play should be easy to understand acoustically and in terms of content, so that pedestrians passing by will want to stop and watch.
-  Plan a bad weather alternative (e.g. tent or pavilion).
-  Hand out information material during or after the play, so that the audience has the opportunity to become more informed on the subject.

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# TREASURE HUNTING FOR ETHICAL STORES



Meet at the center of your town, a shopping mall or a shopping street.

Split into teams and give each team a list or map of fashion companies that practice ethical labour.

Each team has to visit each store on the list and find out what the company has done to promote ethical labour.

The team that gathers the most information in the allotted time wins. You could prepare a questionnaire beforehand.

In the end, debrief together and discuss the findings of each team and how they could use this information to make more informed fashion choices in the future.

*CONTACT THE STORES AND AGREE THAT  
THE YOUTHS HAVE TO COLLECT SPECIAL  
ITEMS IN EACH STORE.  
YOU COULD EITHER DISTRIBUTE THEM  
BEFOREHAND OR HAVE THE SHOPS DO  
SOME GIVEAWAYS THEMSELVES!*

**START  
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# CHANGE THE SYSTEM

IN THIS SECTION YOU CAN LEARN HOW TO START YOUR OWN CAMPAIGN AND PUT PRESSURE ON BRANDS!

HOW TO START A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

BE AN INFLUENCER FOR FAIR FASHION

PUTTING PRESSURE ON BRANDS



# HOW TO START A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Be an advocate for sustainable fashion by starting a social media bottom-up campaign to raise awareness about slow fashion and encourage your peers to make more sustainable choices when it comes to their clothing.

## STEPS FOR CREATING A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

### STEP 1: DO YOUR RESEARCH

The first step to starting a social media campaign is to research the topic. Learn about the different aspects of slow fashion such as the materials used, the production processes, and the impact they have on the environment and people. You can also research the different brands that promote slow fashion and the types of clothing they produce, along with the impacts this has on the environment and society.

### DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE

The first step in starting a social media campaign also requires that you define your target audience. In this case, your audience is teenagers/young people. It's important to understand their interests, habits, and preferences when it comes to fashion. Being a young person yourself, creating relevant and engaging content shouldn't be too difficult.

### STEP 2: MAKE AN EDITORIAL PLAN

Once you have defined your target audience, it's time to create an editorial plan. This should include your goals, the message you want to convey, and the types of content you will be sharing. For example, you may want to use Instagram to share pictures of sustainable fashion items and show how they can be styled, or use TikTok to create videos of sustainable fashion hacks.

### STEP 3: CREATE CONTENT

The next step is to create content that aligns with your campaign strategy. This could include images, videos, infographics, and text posts. Social media is all about visuals so try to be creative, but also informative. You can also use hashtags, influencers, and other tactics to reach a wider audience.

### STEP 4: PROMOTE YOUR CAMPAIGN

Once you have created your content, it's time to promote your campaign. You can use social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to reach your target audience. You can also use influencers, bloggers, and other social media personalities to help spread the word about your campaign.

### STEP 5: MEASURE YOUR RESULTS

The final step is to measure your results. This includes tracking your campaign's reach, engagement, and conversions (tracking your audience's actions to see whether they do what you hope they will). Use tools like Instagram Analytics Tool to track your results and make adjustments to your campaign as needed.



# TIPS FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

## DEFINE YOUR DESIRED AUDIENCE

Who would you like to bring on board with your campaign? Make sure you understand their interests, values, and behaviours so that you can tailor your content to them.

## CREATE A HASHTAG

Choose a unique hashtag for your campaign and use it consistently in all of your posts. Ask your followers to use the hashtag when sharing/reposting. This will make it easier for people to find and engage with your content.

## POST ENGAGING CONTENT

Share high-quality photos and videos that showcase your eco-fashion products and promote eco-fashion sustainability values. Use captions to tell a story and encourage your followers to take action. Respect the copyright and fair use guidelines. You can also include facts and statistics about the impact of fast fashion on the environment and people, as well as information about sustainable and ethically made clothing options.

## USE FEATURES

Take advantage of features such as stories and reels, to share behind-the-scenes content and give your followers a deeper look into your cause.

## ENGAGE WITH YOUR FOLLOWERS

Respond to comments and messages and interact with other accounts in the eco-fashion industry. This will help build relationships and increase the reach of your campaign.

## ANALYSE YOUR RESULTS

Use analytics tools to track the success of your campaign. Look at metrics such as engagement, reach, and website clicks to see what's working and what you can improve.

## COLLABORATE WITH INFLUENCERS AND OTHER CREATORS

This can help you reach a larger and more engaged audience and build credibility for your campaign.

## HOST A CHALLENGE OR CONTEST

This can be a fun and interactive way to get your followers involved and helps spread the word about your actions.

## KEEP YOUR CONTENT FRESH AND REAL

Be up-to-date and interesting, using different types of formats and styles to keep things fresh for your followers. Find your own style, be authentic, and be yourself.

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# BE AN INFLUENCER FOR FAIR FASHION

Every year, approximately 100 billion items of clothing are being produced. More than half of it ends up in the garbage. In the last 15 years, the number of garments produced worldwide has doubled, while the period of use is becoming shorter and shorter. Meanwhile, textile companies are making a fortune exploiting workers along the supply chain.

More information about the grievances in the clothing supply chains, presented with humorous short videos about the throwaway society, can be found here.  
Simply click on the video to watch it!



MUST-HAVE FOR SUMMER



YOU CAN'T HAVE ENOUGH OF THEM

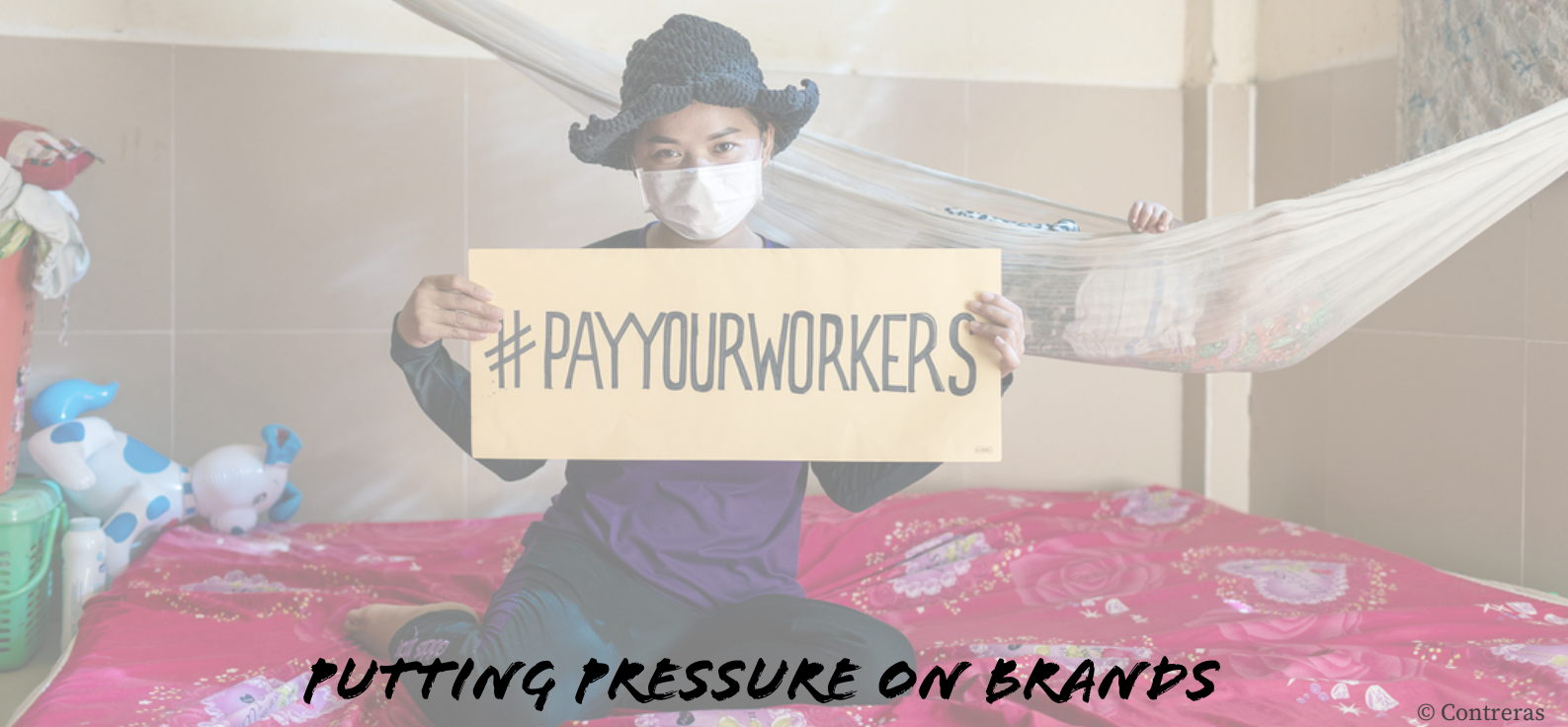


TODAY IT WILL BE COZY!  
MY WINTER SPECIAL

If you like to shoot videos yourself or if you enjoy being in front of the camera and being on social media, try it out and become an influencer for fair fashion.

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## PUTTING PRESSURE ON BRANDS

Are you still feeling alone in your attempt to make the fashion industry a bit fairer? Let us introduce you to two worldwide movements and share their ideas to get active!

In the global **PayYourWorkers Campaign** 285 trade unions and labour rights organisations around the world have joined together to demand immediate relief for garment workers and apparel industry reform.

**Fashion Revolution** has become the world's largest fashion activism movement, mobilising citizens, brands and policymakers through research, education and advocacy.

## HERE ARE 2 IDEAS ON HOW TO CAMPAIGN FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS IN THE GARMENT INDUSTRY

1

Make the clothes labels more accurate!



The labels of clothes should actually indicate human rights violations. Find examples of accurate labels on the next page!

You can print them out and hide them in bags and piles of clothes in shops. The label contains a QR code that leads to the #payyourworkers campaign page. If you make holes in the printed labels, you can even attach them to the actual clothes labels.



Print out the labels and cut along the markings



HUMAN RIGHTS

"We have to borrow money to feed our children."

SIZE OF INJUSTICE	
L	EU USA UK MEX L XL L 30

#PayYourWorkers



HUMAN RIGHTS

"Thousands of workers like myself are going to bed without food."

SIZE OF INJUSTICE	
L	EU USA UK MEX L XL L 30

#PayYourWorkers



HUMAN RIGHTS

"I always lived hand to mouth. I have nothing to reduce or to curtail."

SIZE OF INJUSTICE	
L	EU USA UK MEX L XL L 30

#PayYourWorkers



HUMAN RIGHTS

"I used to eat vegetables but now I usually consume only cornflour meals."

SIZE OF INJUSTICE	
L	EU USA UK MEX L XL L 30

#PayYourWorkers



HUMAN RIGHTS

JOIN THE GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION

SIZE OF INJUSTICE	
L	EU USA UK MEX L XL L 30

#PayYourWorkers



HUMAN RIGHTS

JOIN THE GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION

SIZE OF INJUSTICE	
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#PayYourWorkers



HUMAN RIGHTS

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SIZE OF INJUSTICE	
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#PayYourWorkers



HUMAN RIGHTS

JOIN THE GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION

SIZE OF INJUSTICE	
L	EU USA UK MEX L XL L 30

#PayYourWorkers



# 2

Write a postcard, e-mail or letter to a brand or policy maker!  
[Find templates here!](#)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

*I am writing in solidarity with garment workers worldwide.*

...

*Please tell me, what are you doing to ensure that the people who make your clothes are being paid a living wage?*

*Looking forward to hearing back from you.*

*Yours sincerely,*



FIND A LARGE  
COLLECTION OF  
EDUCATIONAL  
MATERIAL,  
CAMPAIGN TOOLS,  
AND IDEAS HERE!



**START  
PART 1**

**START  
PART 2**



FOLLOW  
US



**THANK YOU FOR USING OUR  
TOOLKIT!**

**HAVE FUN FINDING YOUR OWN STYLE, EXPLORING  
SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES, FINDING LIKE-MINDED  
PEOPLE, CREATING BEAUTIFUL CLOTHES YOURSELF AND  
LEARNING MORE AND MORE ABOUT FAIR FASHION!**



**KAINOTOMIA**  
kėvipo dia žilou jūdnans



Centrum Wspierania  
Edukacji  
i Przedsiębiorczości



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