SMALL STEPS, BIG CHANGES

HANDBOOK FOR IMPLEMENTING THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

LET'S BE SUSTAINABLE IN OUR TEXTILE PRACTICES AND RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR OLDER ADULTS

Guide for Trainers Delivering Education on Sustainable Textile Practices

Slovenska univerza za tretje življenjsko obdobje

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MESSAGE FROM THE PROJECT LEAD
Maja Ferme

WHY DID WE DECIDE TO CREATE THIS PROJECT?

Fashion has always been a reflection of society, its values, its development, and its culture. At the same time, it is one of the largest global industries, shaping our lifestyles and influencing how we see ourselves and the world. My more than 25-year journey in the fashion world—from design work, numerous collaborations with different industries, education and work in New York, to nearly a year of travelling around the world with my family—has given me a deeply valuable, comprehensive insight into how the fashion industry operates and how it affects the planet and society. Along the way, I received several recognitions, including the Elle Style Awards, and the international production company Warner Bros identified me as one of the most promising designers in the world. Yet my behind-the-scenes experience in the fashion industry also revealed another side of fashion—facts and data that society often overlooks.

The global textile industry produces around 150 billion pieces of clothing every year and generates approximately 93 million tonnes of waste. 85% of all clothing ends up in landfills annually. The textile industry is the fourth biggest polluter in Europe and one of the key drivers of climate change. In Slovenia, an average individual throws away 12.3 kg of clothing per year, exceeding the European average. Resource use is equally concerning: producing one cotton T-shirt requires around 2,700 litres of water, enough drinking water for one person for 2.5 years. A single pair of jeans requires enough water for one person to drink for 10 years.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the fashion industry is the second largest consumer of water in the world, and the textile industry is the third largest polluter. It is responsible for 8–10% of all global greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, despite increasing production, the lifespan of clothing continues to decrease—over the past 15 years, we wear garments 40% less often.

Through my work, research, and travels, I came to a clear conclusion: sustainability is a necessity, and change is possible—but only through education, awareness-raising, and cooperation. Knowledge is the foundation of responsible behaviour, and collaboration is the key to long-term solutions.

This is why, at the FERME Academy, we decided to engage in international projects dedicated to sustainable textile practices. Sustainability is not a trend, but a responsibility to the planet and future generations. It is a commitment to meeting our present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

Achieving sustainable development requires a unified vision across all sectors—individuals, businesses, educational institutions, and local and global organisations. The key guiding principles of the project are:
- responsible resource management,
- waste reduction,
- promoting a fairer and more inclusive world.

The project is designed with a focus on groups often overlooked in educational processes—older adults. Their experience from the era of “slow fashion”, when quality mattered more than quantity, represents an immense value we want to revive. Research shows that price is not the only factor influencing clothing purchases; therefore, we aim to strengthen consumer knowledge, critical thinking, and bridge the gap between the education of young and older generations.

PROJECT PARTNERS AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project is carried out within the Erasmus+ programme and is the result of collaboration between three partners from different countries, environments, and professional fields. Diversity, interdisciplinarity, and exchange of good practices are the core strengths of our joint work.

Studio MF, FERME Academy (Slovenia) is the lead partner, bringing long-standing experience in fashion, design, education, and sustainable textile practices. It contributes professional expertise, development of educational content, modern pedagogical approaches, and innovative awareness-raising methods on responsible and ethical fashion, ensuring a strong professional foundation for the project.

The Slovenian Third Age University is the largest national organisation for the education of older adults. With its strong andragogical tradition, understanding of target groups, and wide network of local communities, it ensures that the programme is tailored to older participants, their expectations, and learning needs. Its mission includes promoting active ageing, lifelong learning, and intergenerational cooperation.

Hola Ghana (Spain) is an international organisation working in global education, intercultural dialogue, and sustainable development. It brings broader insight into global impacts of the textile industry and experience in socio-environmental projects in diverse international contexts.

Together, the partnership brings expertise in sustainable development, the textile industry, andragogy, and digital education. Through knowledge exchange, experience sharing, and collaborative methods, this project establishes a learning environment that supports the development of high-quality educational programmes, strengthens educator competencies, and improves access for older adults to relevant sustainable content locally and internationally.

We have jointly developed an educational programme supported by a comprehensive set of materials—this handbook, video content, brochures, posters, and other learning tools. All materials are freely available at: www.premiumferme.com (tab: Sustainability).

With this educational programme, we aim to:
- reduce negative environmental impacts of the fashion industry,
- encourage responsible clothing purchase, use, and reuse,
- develop critical thinking about consumer habits,
- raise awareness of textile impacts on health, environment, and society,
- provide new learning opportunities for adults aged 60+,
- contribute to a more sustainable future.

I believe that with knowledge, cooperation, and responsible action, we can create a fashion industry based on quality, respect for nature, and human dignity.

Sustainability is the future of fashion.
Our mission is to co-create that future—together.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE HANDBOOK

The handbook is intended for adult education providers, mentors, and teachers who wish to introduce participants to the importance of sustainable textile use and encourage responsible behaviour in everyday life.
It was developed within the Erasmus+ KA210-ADU Small-Scale Partnerships in Adult Education project, whose goal is to develop knowledge and skills for sustainable behaviour, especially among older adults.
The handbook is a **didactic tool** that supports trainers in planning, implementing, and evaluating educational activities on sustainable fashion and responsible textile management. It offers theoretical foundations, proposals for learning activities, and practical advice for working with older adults. It is intended for all those who implement non-formal adult education, mentors, teachers, volunteers, and leaders of study circles who work with older participants.

The purpose of the handbook is to encourage trainers to include sustainability-related content in their educational programmes, particularly in the field of **responsible textile use and management.** It is based on the experience of project partners Studio MF, the Slovenian Third Age University (UTŽO), and Hola Ghana ONGD; on content created during pilot programme implementations in Slovenia and Spain; on evaluations by trainers and participants (2025); on existing European guidelines for adult education (EAEA[1], EPALE[2]); and on the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030[3]).
It provides a simple, transferable, and practical model for implementing educational programmes that help older adults gain new knowledge, skills, and awareness of the textile industry's impact on the environment, health, and society—and understand how everyday changes can contribute to environmental protection.
The handbook is also a tool that promotes active citizenship among older adults by involving them as agents of change in their local communities. It is designed to allow adaptations for participants with various needs (mobility impairments, blind or visually impaired persons, deaf or hard of hearing persons) and can be used in different delivery formats: in-person, hybrid, or online.
The objectives of the handbook are to:
· provide a comprehensive **didactic framework** for implementing the educational programme “Let’s Be Sustainable in Our Textile Practices and Raise Awareness About the Importance of Environmental Responsibility”;
· support trainers in **understanding the basic concepts of sustainable development** and the impacts of the textile industry;

[1] https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/EAEA_Manifesto_Digital_Slovenian_Sept.pdf
[2] https://epale.ec.europa.eu
[3] https://www.gov.si/zbirke/projekti-in-programi/uresnicevanje-agende-2030

- offer concrete **learning modules** that can be directly used in programme delivery; encourage **critical thinking, practical learning, and personal transformation** among participants;
- offer **supporting materials for programme implementation**, monitoring, and evaluation of learning outcomes;
- reduce the gap between learning materials available to young people and older adults in the field of sustainability education;
- contribute to the common European goals of the green transition.

1.2 TARGET GROUP

The handbook is intended for trainers of non-formal **adult education** who, within their organisations or local communities, implement programmes aimed at **older participants**. These include mentors, volunteers, members and leaders of Third Age Universities (UTŽO), educators at public adult education centres, representatives of non-governmental organisations, and leaders of various workshops and study circles.

These trainers play a key role in promoting active ageing, lifelong learning, and intergenerational cooperation. The **handbook** provides them with **content**, **methods**, and **practical tools** for integrating sustainability topics into their work. It focuses on strengthening their competencies to lead educational programmes that connect knowledge, experience, and values with responsible environmental behaviour.

The **target group** of the programme supported by the handbook are **older adults** aged 60 and over, with diverse levels of education, life experiences, and interests. The programme is adaptable to their prior knowledge, cognitive abilities, and digital literacy. Special attention is given to including vulnerable groups of older adults with mobility impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, and socially isolated individuals. The goal is to ensure that learning is accessible, enjoyable, and inclusive for all. Thus, the handbook enables trainers to adapt the educational process to the real needs and expectations of older adults, motivate them to participate, and encourage active contribution in their local environment.

1.3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The handbook is based on an andragogical approach[4] that derives from the principles of active and experiential adult learning. Adults learn primarily through their own experiences; therefore, the programme encourages their involvement, participation, and co-creation of knowledge. Trainers act as mentors and facilitators of learning, not merely transmitters of information.

[4] https://www.utzo.si/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/posebnosti-izobra%C5%BEevanja-starej%C5%A1ih.pdf

Key characteristics of the methodological approach include:

- Active learning: participants learn through discussion, exchange of opinions, and practical work. Activities are designed to include movement, creativity, and personal reflection.
- Exchange of experiences: the programme enables participants to share their life stories, knowledge, and skills, strengthening their sense of value, mutual respect, and group connectedness.
- Group work: learning takes place in smaller groups, promoting cooperation, empathy, and support among participants. Group processes increase motivation and the sense of belonging.
- Practical exercises: a large portion of the content focuses on concrete, everyday examples (clothing repair, textile sorting, identifying sustainable materials), as learning is reinforced through practical use.

During programme delivery, trainers use real-life examples and materials to connect theory with practice. Participants recognise the importance of sustainable behaviour within the context of their own lives and local environments.[5]
Special attention is given to visual and sensory support. Learning modules are designed to be accessible to participants with visual impairments or other specific needs. Activities include working with various materials, colours, shapes, and textures, and descriptive language is used to enable holistic understanding and sensory engagement.[6]
After each activity, a reflection follows, allowing participants to consider their feelings, insights, and potential changes in attitudes or behaviour. Reflection supports personal development, reinforces learning, and connects knowledge to real-life situations.

1.4 HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

The handbook is designed as a **practical tool** for trainers of older adults. It allows trainers to implement the programme flexibly, according to group needs, time availability, and spatial conditions. Its purpose is not only to provide content but to encourage trainers to design the learning process actively, creatively, and in alignment with lifelong learning principles.
The handbook is structured to be easily used in different environments: in the classroom, outdoors, or online. It is modular, and each module can be adapted based on group size, available time, space, and participants' learning abilities.

[5] https://www.lu-ajdovscina.si/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/5a_Green-education_-izbrane-metode-za-delo-v-skupini.pdf
[6] https://www.andragosko-drustvo.si/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Zbornik_Andragog-pri-uc%CC%8Cenju-in-izobraz%CC%8Cevanju-odraslih-s-posebnimi-potrebami_A.pdf

STRUCTURE OF THE HANDBOOK

The handbook is divided into the following sections:
1. Introduction: presentation of the purpose and objectives of the handbook, target group, and andragogical principles that guide trainers working with older adults.
2. Programme design: presentation of programme objectives and purpose, target group, duration, methods, delivery approaches, basic outline of modules, and programme conditions.
3**. Learning modules:** content of the five modules with defined learning objectives, theoretical content, and activity descriptions.
4. Supporting materials: didactic materials created within the project (worksheets, sample questionnaires, online resources, video materials, the booklet "The Theory of One Square Metre," leaflet, poster).
5. Examples of good practices

STEPS FOR USING THE HANDBOOK IN PRACTICE

When preparing the educational programme, trainers use the **modules as the basic programme structure.** Each module represents a logical stage in the learning process—from **awareness** to concrete **behavioural change**:

- trainers may shorten or divide modules into several sessions while maintaining a balance between theory, practice, and reflection;
- trainers encourage participants to co-create the content: their experiences, examples, ideas, and questions should be included;
- trainers may use additional resources found in the handbook and their own sets of materials to enrich implementation: video materials, worksheets, digital tasks, examples of good practices;
- trainers should use real examples from everyday life and allow time for discussion and sharing of experiences.

To support trainers in preparing and delivering the programme, each learning module is clearly and concretely explained in the handbook, including how to use it in educational practice.
The following chapters describe the phases of work—from preparation and delivery to reflection—helping trainers ensure high-quality and inclusive programme implementation.

Step 1: Preparation for Delivery
· Before starting, the trainer reviews the structure of each module: learning objectives, content, and planned activities.
· Based on this, the trainer selects the necessary materials and tools (e.g., videos, posters, tables, certificates, worksheets, etc.). They determine which items will be provided by participants and which by the trainer (scissors, textiles, etc.).

- If the module is delivered online or as independent work, the trainer sends participants access links to online resources in advance.

Step 2: Introducing the Module

- The trainer begins with an introductory discussion or a question that encourages reflection on the topic (e.g., “When was the last time you repaired an item of clothing?”).
- This is followed by a short presentation of theoretical content: key concepts, facts, and examples.
- The theoretical part should be supported with visual aids (images, posters, videos) and objects (e.g., different types of textiles).

Step 3: Implementing the Activities

- Each module includes a set of suggested activities (e.g., video analysis, card-based tasks, workshops, quizzes, group exercises).
- Each module description includes:

o learning objectives,
o methods and forms of work,
o teaching tools and materials,
o references,
o time allocation,
o activity description.

- The trainer may choose activities according to the needs of the group. The handbook promotes active and experiential learning, so emphasis should be placed on participation, discussion, and practical work.

Step 4: Use of Supporting Materials

- For each module, supporting materials are listed in the activity descriptions, including video resources, articles, websites, and examples of good practices.
- A detailed description of the supporting materials is available in Chapter 6.
- The trainer may use these resources during the module or share them with participants as independent study materials (e.g., watching a short film, reading an article, completing a simple challenge).

Step 5: Reflection and Evaluation

- At the end of each module, a reflection is suggested—questions that help participants connect the content to their own lives.
- The trainer may use a short group discussion to assess participants' understanding and identify changes they wish to introduce in their own practice.
- During reflection, participants share experiences, concerns, examples, and ideas for further steps in sustainable textile behaviour.
- During the final session, the trainer uses the quiz intended for participants, which provides feedback on the knowledge they have acquired.

ROLE OF THE TRAINER

The trainer acts as a **mentor, motivator, and facilitator**—not merely a lecturer. Their role is to:

- ensure active participation of each participant,
- encourage the exchange of experiences and knowledge,
- maintain a pleasant and inclusive atmosphere,
- adapt the pace and approach to the group,
- promote further independent learning and engagement within the local community.

The handbook is therefore a combination of a professional guide, a practical tool, and a collection of ideas that enable trainers to easily, effectively, and engagingly deliver education on sustainable textile use—contributing to a greener and more inclusive community.

2. ANDRAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES IN PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Education of older adults requires an adapted approach that acknowledges their life experience, needs, motivation, and learning habits. Therefore, the programme is based on principles of active and experiential learning, which form the core of andragogical practice.[7],[8],

2.1. MAIN ANDRAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES[9]

a.) Respect for Participants' Experience and Knowledge
Older adults enter the learning process with rich life experiences that must be recognised and integrated into the educational process. Trainers should encourage the sharing of experiences and stories, which strengthens the sense of value and co-creation of knowledge.

b.) Learning as a Process Rooted in Real-life Situations
Learning must be connected to the real lives of participants. Examples, materials, and activities should arise from their everyday experiences (e.g., caring for clothing, shopping, repairs, identifying quality materials and sustainable brands).

[7] Andragoška načela (dr. Tanja Možina). 2025. Andragoški center Slovenije. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1EnopCG4BM
[8] Kranjc,A. et al. 2013. Posebnosti izobraževanja starejših/Characteristics of older adult edudation. Društvo za izobraževanje za tretje življenjsko obdobje. https://www.utzo.si/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/posebnosti-izobra%C5%BEevanja-starej%C5%A1ih.pdf
[9] https://theelearningcoach.com/learning/characteristics-of-adult-learners/

c.) Practical Orientation and Active Participation
Older adults learn best through hands-on experience and practical work. The programme includes practical workshops, research tasks, and independent activities where participants can test new knowledge in practice. Active methods (role-playing, workshops, group problem-solving) increase motivation and the sense of achievement.

d.) Learning in a Supportive and Safe Environment
Participants need a sense of acceptance, respect, and safety. Trainers should foster a positive atmosphere, humour, and cooperation, as this reduces fear of failure and strengthens social bonds within the group.

e.) Adapting the Learning Process to Age-related Characteristics
Trainers should consider:

- pace of learning (slower delivery of information, more time for reflection and questions),
- multisensory learning (combination of visual, auditory, and tactile stimuli),
- clear content structure (summaries, repetition, visual diagrams),
- appropriate physical environment (good lighting, contrast, comfort, accessibility).

f.) Internal Motivation and Sense of Purpose
Older adults often learn because they want to remain active, useful, and socially engaged. Trainers should highlight how the content relates to their everyday lives, health, and the environment. Participants should recognise the **personal significance** of learning and how their actions contribute to the common good.

g.) Learning Through Reflection
Each activity ends with reflection, discussion, or written notes, where participants express what they have learned, what surprised them, and how they will apply the new knowledge. Reflection strengthens awareness of personal learning and encourages personal growth.

h.) Accessibility and Inclusion[10]
The programme should be accessible to all participants. Materials should be prepared in larger print, with strong contrast and clear language. Where possible, **audio or digital support** should be used (videos, recordings, QR codes, website links). Participants with visual, hearing, or mobility impairments must have equal opportunities to participate.

[10] Andragog pri učenju in izobraževanju odraslih s posebnimi potrebami; Prispevki s posveta Andragoško društvo Slovenije; Ljubljana 2016. https://www.andragosko-drustvo.si/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Zbornik_Andragog-pri-uc%CC%8Cenju-in-izobraz%CC%8Cevanju-odraslih-s-posebnimi-potrebami_B.pdf

3. DESIGN OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

3.1 PROGRAMME TITLE

Let's Be Sustainable in Our Textile Practices and Raise Awareness About the Importance of Environmental Responsibility

3.2 PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme aims to promote sustainable behaviour and understanding of the impact of the textile industry on the environment and society. Participants develop knowledge, skills, and values for sustainable textile practices and for transferring this knowledge into their local environment.

3.3 TARGET GROUP

Older adults (60+), regardless of prior knowledge. The programme allows adjustments for participants with special needs (mobility impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments).

3.4 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

- Raise awareness about sustainable textile practices.
- Influence changes in consumer habits and reduce waste.
- Increase knowledge about the impact of the textile industry on health and the environment.
- Encourage older adults to take an active role in sustainable practices within their community.

3.5 PROGRAMME DURATION AND STRUCTURE

The programme is **modular.** It allows flexibility depending on the needs of trainers, organisations, and participants. Based on pilot implementations and feedback, a **flexible structure of five modules** has been confirmed, which can be delivered in different combinations:

1st option: face-to-face delivery

- The entire programme is delivered in a classroom or workshop.
- Suitable for groups with regular meetings who want a comprehensive process with high interaction.

2nd option: face-to-face combined with online delivery

- A hybrid format in which the fourth module is delivered online (Zoom, MS Teams).
- Suitable for participants with basic digital literacy who prefer to complete part of the content from home.

3rd option: face-to-face combined with independent work at home

- Adapted for groups who prefer working at their own pace. After the third module, participants receive **worksheets and instructions** for home tasks such as wardrobe review, ten sustainable actions, or video content.
- Independent home work represents the fourth module.

The total duration of the programme in all formats is **15 hours,** including independent home work. Each module lasts 3 teaching hours. Content can be expanded, increasing the number of hours.

Older adults best respond to a **combination of in-person sessions, practical work, and home tasks**. Therefore, **workshops that include making, repairing, or reusing clothing**, and **group discussions where participants share experiences and examples of good practice**, are recommended.

PROGRAMME CONTENT

MODULE	Title	Content
1. MODULE	Introduction to Sustainability	- The meaning of sustainability and the circular economy, impacts of the textile industry on the environment and society, understanding one's role as a consumer. - Life cycle of jeans and a cotton T-shirt.
2. MODULE	Facing Reality	- The dark side of fashion. - Environmental and social impacts of the textile industry (pollution, working conditions, water use, waste). - Sustainable materials, certifications. - Greenwashing.
3. MODULE	Responsible Choice	- The concept of slow and fast fashion. - Chemicals in the textile industry. - Responsible purchasing and textile care.
4. MODULE	My Contribution to Change	- Booklet "The Theory of One Square Metre". - Home assignments.
5. MODULE	Change Is Possible	- Adapting the wardrobe for sustainable textile management. - Benefits of slow fashion. - What have we learned?

Each module includes **theoretical and practical parts**, real-life **examples**, **materials**, and **reflection**. Trainers are encouraged to adjust the duration and focus depending on the group, while maintaining a balance between i**nformative, creative, and experiential learning.**

3.6 METHODS AND FORMS OF WORK

Methods: explanation, discussion, case study, workshop, role-play, quiz, reflection.
Forms of work: group work, pair work, individual work, fieldwork, online learning.

3.7 CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Space	accessible classroom, computer, projector, good lighting, sufficient workspace.
Group size	up to 12 participants.
Schedule	morning sessions.
Digitalal tools	online tools such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Mentimeter.
Accessibility	adapted materials, added descriptions, video descriptions, internet and multimedia access.
Other	printing materials, sewing machines if needed, paper, markers, fabric.

3.8 STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

ITrainers must have knowledge in sustainability, textiles, or adult education, andragogical–pedagogical competencies, and experience working with older adults. Training may also be delivered by motivated individuals willing to learn.

3.9 PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Evaluation is key to programme delivery, enabling monitoring of participant progress and assessing the quality and relevance of the programme.

It is conducted on two levels:
1. Level – participant progress evaluation: – monitors achieved learning objectives, acquired knowledge, skills, and behavioural changes.
2. Level – programme quality evaluation – measures participant satisfaction with content, delivery, materials, trainer support, and perceived effects on habits and sustainable behaviour.
Evaluation activities include:

- **Monitoring progress::** self-assessment, review of practical products, final quiz.;
- **Programme evaluation:** satisfaction questionnaire, usefulness of acquired knowledge, perceived impact on personal changes and sustainable behaviour.

Regular feedback collection ensures continuous improvement and effective programme delivery.

3.10 CONCLUSION

Participants receive a certificate of participation.

INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABILITY

4.1. MODULE 1

4. EDUCATIONAL MODULES

4.1. MODUL 1 - INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABILITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	By the end of the module, participants will be able to: • understand the concept of sustainability and identify the three pillars of sustainable development (environmental, social, economic); • distinguish between fast fashion and slow fashion and recognise how consumer habits impact the environment; • understand the global journey and production process of jeans and cotton T-shirts, including associated environmental and social impacts; • analyse the environmental and health-related challenges connected with denim production (water usage, chemicals, working conditions); • develop critical thinking skills about the impacts of the textile industry on the environment, society, and individuals; • become aware of the importance of responsible consumption and sustainable attitudes toward clothing.
LEARNING METHODS	lecture, discussion, dialogue, case study (video), worksheet or card-based activities
FORMS OF LEARNING	frontal instruction: trainer leads the whole group group work: participants work in small groups.
TEACHING MATERIALS AND TOOLS	PPT presentation, videos, photographs, maps, tables, question cards or terminology cards, online resources computer, projector, speaker, screen, printer, board, markers, glue, scissors
REFERENCES USED	• de[BK1] Castro, O. (2021). Loved Clothes Last: How the Joy of Rewearing and Repairing Your Clothes Can Be a Revolutionary Act. Penguin • Cline, E. L. (2019). The Conscious Closet: The Revolutionary Guide to Looking Good While Doing.Plume • Minney, S. (2017). Slow Fashion: Aesthetics Meets Ethics. New Internationalist Publications Ltd. • Rhoads, E. (2019). Waste not: Make a big difference by throwing away less. Hardie Grant Books. • Modna revolucija. (n.d.). Modna revolucija. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 s https:www.fashionrevolution.org

REFERENCES USED	• Greenpeace. (n.d.). Razstrupljaj mojo modo. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 iz https://www.greenpeace.org/international/act/detox • Dobro za vas. (n.d.). Dobro za vas - etične ocene blagovnih znamk. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 iz https://goodonyou.eco • McCartney, S. (2020). Stella McCartney. Rizzoli International Publications. Morgan, A. (Director). (2015). The true cost [Film]. Life Is My Movie Entertainment. [BK1]
DURATION	**3 teaching hours**

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS
Activities
1. Introduction (10 min) A short introduction to the programme and participant presentations. **2. Understanding Sustainability and the Fashion Industry (65 min)** a.) Begin with a true/false quiz. Participants guess whether statements are TRUE or FALSE. This method stimulates discussion and interaction. You may prepare your own questions or use pre-designed cards found in Chapter 6: 1. učni pripomoček: Razprava o okoljskem in družbenem vplivu tekstilne industrije b.) Definition of sustainability. Present the meaning of sustainability and explain the difference between fast fashion and slow fashion. Additional theory and background material appear later in this module. For visual explanation, use videos such as: Aralsko jezero in Puščava Atacama 1 in Puščava Atacama 2. **3. WORKSHOP: Life Cycle of Jeans and the Life Cycle of a Cotton T- (45 min)** Explain the task first, then divide participants into groups. You may run one or both activities. Materials should be printed in large font with high contrast.

For visual explanation, use videos in chapter 6, such as 2. učni pripomoček: Življenjski cikel kavbojk in 3. učni pripomoček: Življenjski cikel bombažne majice
For additional clarity, show the video Življenjski cikel kavbojk.

4. Reflection (10 min)
Conclude Module 1 with reflection questions, linking learning to personal behaviour.
Example questions:
• How often do I think about where my clothes come from and who made them?
• Which of my habits already contribute to more sustainable clothing use, and where do I see room for improvement?
• Why do I believe sustainable fashion is important for future generations?

Brief presentation of the content of MODULE 2

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability is a necessary approach to protecting our planet and improving the quality of life for all people. Without sustainable practices, we face deep ecological and social crises that will affect our future.
Responsible resource management, waste reduction, and striving for a fairer world are essential for long-term wellbeing.

Sustainability refers to the ability to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.
It requires a balance between environmental, social, and economic aspects, ensuring that natural resources are used in ways that do not exhaust or damage them in the long term.[11]

[11]https://ecoactivetech.com/exploring-the-three-pillars-of-sustainability-a-comprehensive-overview/

Sustainability is commonly divided into three key pillars:

Environmental Sustainability: Protecting natural resources and ecosystems and reducing the negative impacts of human activity on the environment This includes reducing pollution, saving water and energy, reducing CO_2 emissions, and promoting renewable energy sources.

Social Sustainability: Improving the quality of life for all people, promoting fairness, equality, access to essential services (healthcare, education, fair labour conditions), and considering the needs of vulnerable groups.

Economic Sustainability: Creating stable economic systems that enable growth without exhausting resources or causing long-term social or environmental harm. This includes ethical business practices, responsible consumption, and support for local and circular economic models.

WHY IS SUSTAINABILITY IMPORTANT?

Protection of the Planet:
Our everyday activities—such as pollution, overuse of natural resources, and deforestation—threaten the balance of the ecosystems that sustain our lives. A sustainable approach helps preserve natural resources (such as water, air, forests, and soil), which are essential for our survival. With climate change, loss of biodiversity, and environmental degradation, we are facing consequences that will affect not only us, but also future generations. Sustainability is crucial for maintaining a healthy planet.

Preventing the Depletion of Natural Resources:
Our civilisation depends on natural resources such as fossil fuels, water, and minerals. If we continue to ignore the declining availability of these resources, we will pay a high price in the future.
Sustainability enables us to use resources in ways that allow them to regenerate or be replaced.

Reducing Social Inequality:
Sustainable development also addresses issues of social justice. It ensures a fairer distribution of resources and opportunities, while helping to reduce poverty, discrimination, and inequalities within society. Sustainability improves living conditions for everyone, including future generations.

Economic Stability and Long-Term Growth:
Although sustainability is often associated primarily with environmental measures, it also brings long-term economic benefits. Sustainable businesses are often more innovative, efficient, and resilient to changes in the economy. The use of renewable energy sources, the circular economy, and responsible business practices contribute to greater stability and reduced business risks.

Encouraging Innovation:
Sustainability promotes the search for new solutions to long-standing problems. It raises awareness of how technology and new business practices can help manage natural resources more effectively, improve efficiency, and create value without harming the environment. Examples include the development of renewable energy sources (solar and wind energy), electric vehicles, recycling technologies, and sustainable agricultural practices.

HOW CAN SUSTAINABILITY BE ACHIEVED?

Achieving Sustainable Development Requires Collective Effort
Achieving sustainable development requires joint efforts across all sectors — from individuals and businesses to governments and global organisations.
Below are several important steps we can take to support sustainable development.

Reducing Resource Consumption: Simple actions such as saving energy, reducing water use, minimising food waste, and lowering overall waste production are essential for sustainability.

Supporting Sustainable Businesses: Companies that prioritise sustainable practices—such as recycling, using environmentally friendly materials, and engaging in ethical business conduct—help create a better world for everyone.

Promoting Recycling and the Circular Economy: Reusing materials and reducing waste lessen the burden on natural resources and help decrease pollution.

Transitioning to Renewable Energy Sources: Switching to renewable energy, such as solar, wind, and hydropower, contributes to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions.

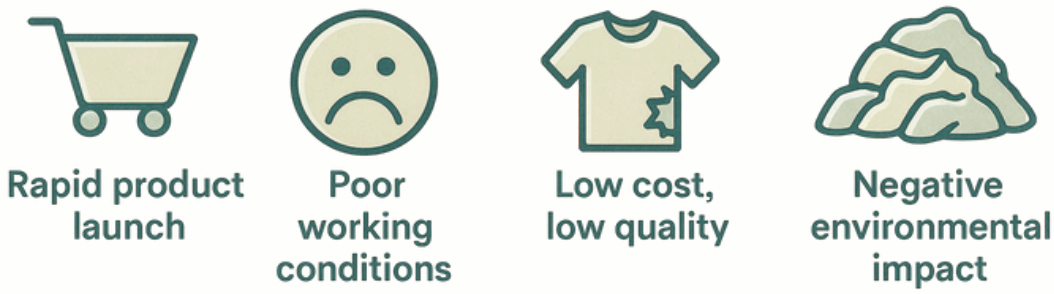
Education and Awareness-Raising: Educating people about the importance of sustainability is crucial. This includes topics such as promoting organic farming and learning about sustainable fashion practices.

FAST FASHION

The business model of fast fashion is based on extremely rapid, low-cost, and large-scale production of fashion collections, allowing retailers to follow current fashion trends as quickly as possible.
A key characteristic of fast fashion is the constant introduction of new products, which appear in stores weekly or monthly, encouraging frequent purchasing.
Clothing items are typically very affordable but made from lower-quality materials, meaning they wear out quickly and end up as waste.[12]

This type of production often takes place in countries with low labour costs, where working conditions are poor, wages are low, and working hours are long.
In addition to social consequences, fast fashion has a major negative environmental impact, as it leads to high consumption of water, energy, and chemicals, and produces enormous amounts of textile waste.

The fast-fashion system promotes a culture of overconsumption, where consumers buy more clothing than they actually need and discard it quickly.



[12]https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292354391_Fast_Fashion_Business_Model_Overview_and_Research_Opportunities

SLOW FASHION

As a response to the negative effects of fast fashion, the slow fashion movement emerged. It is based on the principles of sustainability, quality, and ethics, and it differs significantly from the fast-fashion business model. Its goal is not the rapid mass sale of cheap garments but the creation of long-term value for customers, workers, and the environment. Companies that follow this model produce smaller batches of high-quality items made from sustainable, often natural or recycled materials. This reduces resource consumption and the amount of waste generated. Production often takes place locally or regionally, which lowers the carbon footprint of transportation and allows for better control over working conditions.
A key element of the slow-fashion model is fair pay and respect for workers rights, which strengthens the company's social responsibility. Because of higher production costs, products are generally more expensive but more durable, encouraging consumers to buy fewer but higher-quality garments.
Many companies also offer after-sales services such as repairs, resale, rental, or clothing recycling, which further extends the product's life cycle. Marketing focuses on educating customers about sustainable consumption and encouraging thoughtful purchases rather than creating constant new trends.

In the long term, this business model builds customer loyalty, reduces environmental impact, and supports a more balanced and responsible textile system.
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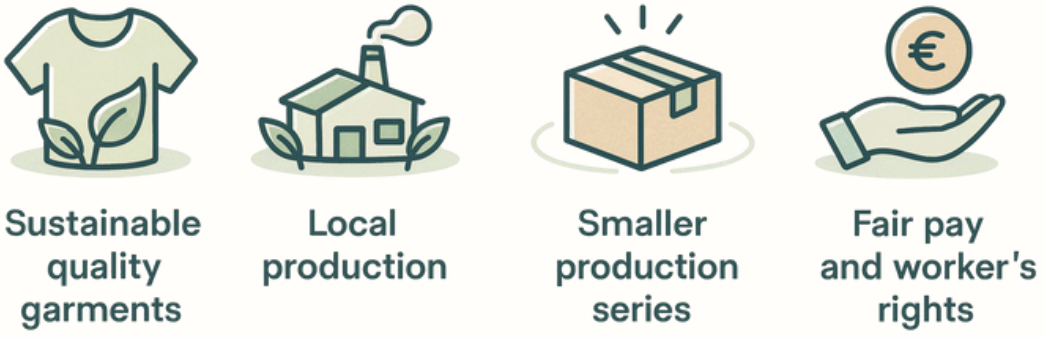


EXPLANATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Sustainability	Pomeni izpolnjevanje današnjih potreb, ne da bi škodovali prihodnjim generacijam. Uravnoveša okoljske, gospodarske in družbene dejavnike, da zagotovi dolgoročno blaginjo.
CO2 Emissions	Meeting today's needs without harming the ability of future generations to meet theirs. It balances environmental, economic, and social factors to ensure long-term well-being.
Social Inequality	Uneven distribution of resources and opportunities, leading to differences in wealth, education, and health.
Renewable Energy	Energy derived from sources such as the sun and wind, which naturally replenish and are environmentally friendly, reducing dependence on fossil fuels.
Circular Economy	A system focused on reducing waste by reusing, repairing, and recycling products, promoting sustainability and efficient use of resources.
Microplastic Pollution	Widespread use of synthetic fibres such as polyester in fashion leads to the release of microplastics into the environment. When washed, these microplastics enter water systems, pollute oceans, harm marine life, and affect human health through consumption of contaminated seafood.

CONFRONTING REALITY

4.2. MODULE 2

4.2. MODULE 2 - CONFRONTING REALITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Udeleženci bodo po koncu modula: • understand the global impacts of the textile industry on the environment, society, and the economy; • understand the connection between consumption, pollution, and working conditions in the fashion industry; • recognise the human and environmental costs of fast fashion, including impacts on health, inequality, and workers' rights; • develop the ability to critically evaluate sustainability claims made by fashion brands and identify misleading practices (greenwashing); • connect their personal consumer habits with global consequences and understand the role of individuals in driving sustainable change; • acquire knowledge for ethical assessment of the fashion industry's impacts and develop awareness of social responsibility in choosing and using clothing.
LEARNING METHODS	lecture, discussion, project work, video analysis, workshop, work with worksheets or cards
FORMS OF LEARNING	frontal instruction: the trainer leads the whole group group work: participants are divided into smaller groups individual work
TEACHING MATERIALS AND TOOLS	PPT presentation, The Dark Side of Fashion video, photographs, tables, online resources computer, projector, speaker, screen, printer, board, markers, glue, scissors, fabrics
REFERENCES USED	• Program Združenih narodov za okolje (UNEP). (n.d.). Moda in okolje. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 iz https://www.unep.org/resources • Choudhury, A. K. R. (2014). Environmental impacts of textile production: Production, processes and protection. Woodhead Publishing. • Program Združenih narodov za okolje (UNEP). (n.d.). Moda in okolje. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 iz https://www.unep.org/resources

REFERENCES USED	• Choudhury, A. K. R. (2014). Environmental impacts of textile production: Production, processes and protection. Woodhead Publishing. • Trajnost (MDPI). (n.d.). Odprto dostopna revija o trajnostni modi in tekstilu. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 iz https://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability • Revija za modno tehnologijo in tekstilno inženirstvo. (n.d.). Članki z odprtim dostopom o trajnosti tekstila. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 iz https://www.longdom.org/fashion-technology-textile-engineering.html
DURATION	3 teaching hours

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS
Activities
1. Introduction: Watching the video The Dark Side of Fashion (30 minutes) Briefly review the content covered in the previous module. Watch the video, which clearly illustrates environmental damage, health consequences for workers and consumers, and the global challenges we are facing. The video titled The Dark Side of Fashion is available at the provided link.na povezavi. You can support the discussion with theoretical content that is explained in more detail later in this module. Introduce unfair labour practices and social issues using the task Cutting Apart a Cotton T-shirt. A detailed description of this task can be found in Chapter 6, under learning tool 4: Earning Breakdown of a T-Shirt **2. The Most Commonly Used Materials in the Textile Industry (45 min, presentation)** The theoretical section of this module provides a detailed overview of various types of materials and their role in sustainable fashion. Participants may prepare a comparison between organic and conventional cotton to illustrate how material choice affects people, health, the environment, and society. You may bring a variety of fabric samples so participants can examine them by touch. Encourage participants to bring examples of textile items from home so you can jointly explore which materials they are made from. The following video materials may be helpful during the presentation: • Nylon, • Rami, • Positive story - Material Recycling in Prato,

- Producing Clothing from recikliranega poliestra

Additional expert explanations on the impact of materials on sustainable fashion are presented later in this module.

3. Greenwashing and Certifications (45 min)

Present the main sustainability certifications in fashion, which are described in detail in the theoretical section of this module.
Next, discuss examples of sustainability marketing in the fashion industry and analyse cases of greenwashing.
Participants can prepare a comparative table of green claims and present examples of truly sustainable practices as well as those that mislead consumers.
As an example of good practice, present Laundry microplastic filter bag, which demonstrates a real sustainable solution.
For additional illustration, watch the video Sustainable Slovenian brands, which showcases examples of responsible and innovative practices in the fashion sector. A detailed description of the activity and instructions for presenting greenwashing can be found in Chapter 6, under Learning Tool 7-Greenwashing.
The expert content on sustainability certifications and misleading practices is presented later in this module.

5. Reflection (10 min)

Conclude the second module with a group discussion and an introduction to the content of the next module.
Example reflection questions:
• What surprised me the most in the video or discussion about the impact of the fashion industry on the environment and people?
(Participants become aware of how little information they typically receive as consumers.)
• How can I, as an individual, recognise whether a brand is truly sustainable or using misleading "green" claims (greenwashing)?
(Encourages critical thinking about information presented by companies.)
• How would I feel if I knew that the clothing I wear was produced under poor working conditions? Would that change my shopping habits?
(A personal reflection that supports internal motivation for behaviour change.)

Short Introduction to the Content of MODULE 3

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT STATE OF THE GLOBAL TEXTILE INDUSTRY

The global fashion industry is valued at more than 2.5 trillion USD and provides employment to over 75 million people worldwide (UN), yet it has significant environmental and social impacts.

The textile industry is responsible for approximately 8–10% of all global carbon emissions linked to human activities in the fashion sector.
This exceeds the emissions from all international flights and combined maritime shipping (UNEP).
Fashion contributes to around 20% of global industrial wastewater pollution (WRI).[13]

Each year, the textile industry uses approximately 79 billion cubic meters of water, which is enough to meet the annual water needs of roughly 5 million people (UNCTAD).[14]

From 2002 to 2016, global clothing production doubled, while the average number of times a garment is worn decreased from 200 wears to about 120 wears.[15]
This highlights the impact of the fast fashion model, in which cheap and short-lived textiles encourage consumers to frequently replace their wardrobe.

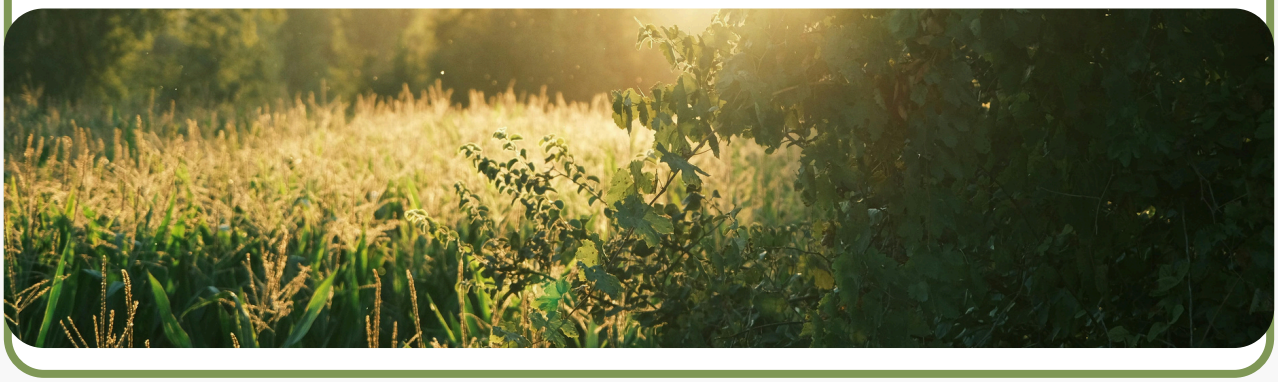
Adopting new materials, technologies, and sustainable practices is crucial to making the industry more environmentally friendly, protecting the planet, ensuring human health, and building a more sustainable future.

The Impact of Textile Consumption in the EU on Nature and Climate

In Europe, textile consumption is the fourth largest driver of environmental pressure and climate change, right after housing, food, and mobility.

Pextile consumption leads to:

- significant land and water use across the value chain,
- the highest consumption of material resources,
- being one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions,
- pollution and health risks due to chemicals used in textiles.



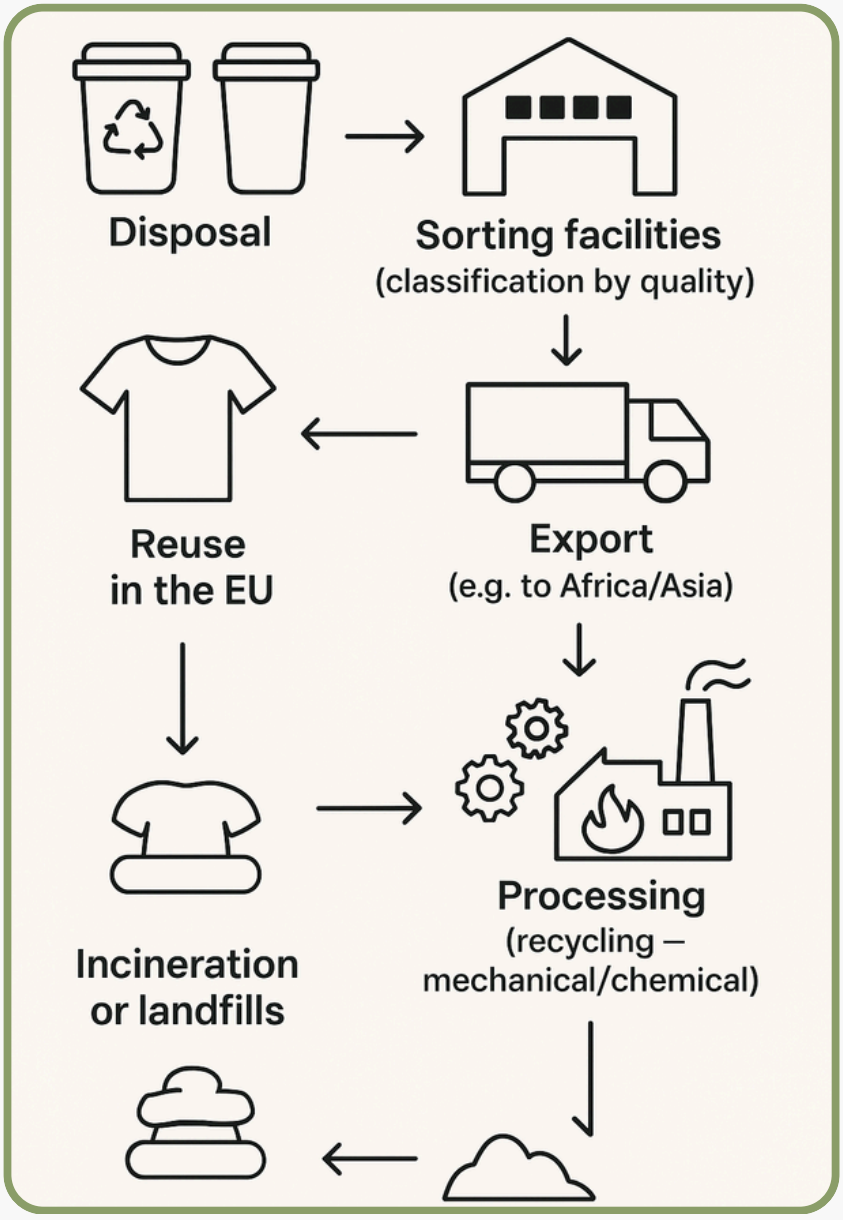
[13] https://www.modaes.com/global/markets/fashion-raises-emissions-for-first-time-since-2019-according-to-apparel-impact-institute
[14] https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/03/
[15]https://www.weforum.org/stories/2019/01/fast-fashion-is-unsustainable-heres-what-we-need-to-do/

What Happens to Clothing Discarded in the EU?

Exports of used textiles from the EU have tripled in the last two decades and reached almost 1.7 million tonnes in 2019. However, only 13% of all textile materials used in the clothing supply chain are recycled.[16] About 46% of used textiles are exported to African countries, where over half are reused while the rest ends up in landfills or is discarded.

Approximately 41% is exported to Asia, where some textiles are mechanically recycled, while others are re-exported to various Asian and African countries.

The fate of this used textile waste, particularly in Africa and Asia, remains uncertain and is increasingly drawing media and political attention.
From 2025 onward, all EU member states must implement separate textile collection, which is expected to increase the amount of textiles that can be reused.[17]



[17] https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/env/items/
[16]https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/eu-exports-of-used-textiles

HOW DO UNSUSTAINABLE PRACTICES CONTRIBUTE TO GLOBAL ISSUES?

Unsustainable practices across various sectors—including the fashion industry play a major role in global challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, environmental degradation, and social inequality.
These issues affect not only the environment but also human health, ecosystems, and the wellbeing of future generations.

Below is a detailed overview of how unsustainable practices contribute to these global problems:

Climate Change
Excessive greenhouse gas emissions: unsustainable activities, especially reliance on fossil fuels for production and transport (as seen in fashion, agriculture, and energy sectors), significantly contribute to CO_2 emissions.
Rising emissions lead to global warming, causing extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and rising sea levels, all of which threaten agriculture, human health, infrastructure, and biodiversity.
Loss of carbon sinks: unsustainable land-use practices—such as deforestation for agriculture and urban expansion—destroy crucial carbon sinks, reducing the Earth's ability to absorb CO2. This accelerates climate change and worsens air quality.

Depletion of Natural Resources
Overuse of water: industries like agriculture and textile manufacturing use excessive amounts of water, harming freshwater ecosystems and reducing biodiversity. Combined with groundwater depletion and water pollution, this leads to water scarcity and geopolitical tensions.
Overexploitation of mineral resources: unsustainable mining and excessive use of oil, gas, and other non-renewable resources rapidly deplete natural reserves.
This increases dependence on expensive, polluting, and environmentally harmful resources, destabilising ecosystems and economies.

Environmental Pollution
Chemical pollution: toxic chemicals used in agriculture and industry—pesticides, herbicides, synthetic fertilisers—contaminate soil and water. These pollutants enter the food chain, harming humans and animals. Similarly, the textile industry releases large amounts of dyes and synthetic chemicals, causing long-term environmental damage.

Microplastic pollution: synthetic fibres such as polyester and nylon shed microplastics when washed. These particles pollute oceans and eventually enter the human food chain through seafood consumption.

Air pollution: the burning of fossil fuels in industry and transport produces harmful air pollutants (CO_2, nitrogen oxides). Poor air quality leads to respiratory diseases and increased mortality, especially in urban areas

Loss of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Degradation

Habitat destruction: deforestation, intensive agriculture, and urban expansion destroy natural habitats, pushing many species toward endangerment and extinction.

Extinction: biodiversity loss undermines ecosystem stability, reducing access to food, medicines, and essential natural resources.

Overfishing: unsustainable fishing depletes marine life, disrupts food chains, and threatens the health of oceans. This has serious implications for millions of people who rely on fish as a primary food source.

Social and Economic Impacts

Exploitation and inequality: many workers in countries that are major textile producers face poor working conditions, low wages, and a lack of job security. These exploitative practices increase social inequality and prevent workers from accessing basic rights such as healthcare, education, and social services. These conditions undermine individuals' ability to live with dignity.

Access to resources: unsustainable agricultural practices (e.g., monoculture farming) reduce biodiversity and deny communities access to essential natural resources.

In addition, climate-related disasters can force people into refugee situations, further limiting their access to basic necessities.

Health Impacts

Toxic chemicals in the food chain: pesticides and herbicides used in unsustainable farming remain in crops and enter the food chain, causing hormonal disorders, cancers, and neurological issues.

Health risks from environmental pollution:: air and water pollution resulting from unsustainable industrial and agricultural practices contributes to an increase in diseases such as asthma, cardiovascular problems, and cancer. These health conditions have long-term impacts on quality of life and significantly raise healthcare costs.

Environmental Damage Caused by the Fashion Industry

The fashion industry is one of the largest contributors to environmental pollution worldwide. Its operations encompass a wide range of activities, from raw material production and manufacturing to transportation, consumption, and waste disposal, all of which have a significant negative impact on the planet. Below are the main environmental consequences associated with the fashion industry:

High Resource and Energy Consumption

Excessive water use: the fashion industry, especially cotton cultivation, requires enormous amounts of water. Producing just 1 kilogram of cotton requires about 10,000 litres of water. Cotton is often grown in regions with limited water resources, leading to water scarcity and droughts that affect local communities..[18]

Energy consumption: the textile industry uses large amounts of energy in production and transport.

Most energy still comes from fossil fuels, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating climate change.[19]

Water and Soil Pollution

Chemicals and pesticides: cotton cultivation often uses pesticides and herbicides that can seep into groundwater and nearby rivers, posing significant risks to aquatic ecosystems. These chemicals can also contaminate drinking water and create serious health risks for humans.

Toxins from manufacturing and dyeing: the dyeing process in textile factories often involves harmful chemicals that can contaminate local water sources. In addition, washing garments releases toxic substances and microplastics into water systems, causing long-term damage to aquatic biodiversity.

Microplastcs: synthetic materials such as polyester and nylon release microplastics during washing. These particles travel through water systems and end up in the ocean. Microplastics enter marine food chains, affecting aquatic life and ultimately human health.[20]

[18] https://textilelearner.net/water-footprint-in-textile-and-fashion-industry/
[19] https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2023/strengthening-sustainability-in-the-textile-industry
[20] https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/microplastics-long-legacy-left-behind-plastic-pollution

Textile Waste and Pollution

Excessive waste generation: the fashion industry is a major contributor to global textile waste, producing around 92 million tons of waste annually. Most of it ends up in landfills, where decomposition can take decades. Synthetic fibres are especially resistant to breakdown and can remain in the environment for over a century.[21]

Fast fashion: the fast-fashion business model encourages the excessive production of cheap, short-lived garments, resulting in increased waste. These garments are often made from materials that are difficult to recycle and decompose slowly, contributing to ongoing environmental damage.

Non-biodegradable materials: petroleum-based materials, such as polyester, are non-biodegradable. When these garments become waste, they remain in the environment and exacerbate long-term pollution problems.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

High CO_2 emissions: the fashion industry is responsible for about 10% of global carbon dioxide emissions—more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined. These emissions arise during multiple stages of production, including raw material cultivation, manufacturing, and transportation. A significant portion comes from energy needed to produce and ship clothing.[22]

Fossil fuels:: transporting garments from low-cost manufacturing countries (such as China, Bangladesh, and India) to Western markets relies heavily on fossil fuels. Every shipment—typically by ship or plane—releases additional emissions.[23]

Unfair Labour Practices and Social Issues

Poor working conditions: workers in many textile-producing countries face dangerous, poorly paid, and unregulated working conditions. They are frequently exposed to harmful chemicals without proper protective equipment, which poses serious health risks.

Child labour: the fashion industry has also been criticised for involving children in hazardous work, where they handle dangerous chemicals and materials.

Excessive Use of Natural Resources

Non-renewable resources: synthetic fibres such as polyester and nylon are made from non-renewable resources like petroleum. Producing these fibres depletes valuable natural resources and releases toxic substances into the environment.

Ecosystem destruction: growing natural raw materials such as cotton can damage ecosystems. In dry regions, cotton farming can cause soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and reduced soil quality — especially when unsustainable farming practices are used.

[21] https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/unsustainable-fashion-and-textiles-focus-international-day-zero

[22] https://unfccc.int/news/un-helps-fashion-industry-shift-to-low-carbon

[23] https://www.fashiondive.com/news/fashion-industry-fossil-fuels-carbon-emissions-mapping/645992/

The fashion industry plays a major role in environmental degradation. Excessive water and energy consumption, chemical pollution, microplastics, and massive volumes of textile waste all contribute to climate change, pollution of air, water, and soil and depletion of natural resources.
In addition, unethical working conditions often accompany garment production, causing serious social injustice.
By changing our consumption habits, supporting sustainable fashion, and increasing awareness of these environmental issues, we can reduce these harmful effects.

HEALTH IMPACTS ON TEXTILE WORKERS AND CONSUMERS

The textile industry poses significant health risks both for workers involved in production and for consumers wearing the garments. These risks include exposure to toxic chemicals, respiratory problems, skin irritation, physical injury, and even neurological damage. Below is a detailed overview:

Health Risks for Workers in the Textile Industry

Exposure to toxic chemicals

Pesticides and herbicides: workers, especially in cotton cultivation, are often exposed to harmful pesticides and herbicides. Long-term exposure can lead to: cancer, neurological issues (headaches, dizziness, memory loss), hormonal disorders, joint pain, skin irritation and allergic reactions.[24]

Chemical processing agents: Textile processing uses dyes, bleaches, and fixing agents, many containing heavy metals and formaldehyde. Workers inhaling these substances face increased risks of: respiratory disease, poisoning, lung cancer.

Respiratory Problems

Exposure to dust: factories that process natural fibres such as cotton may generate airborne dust particles, which—when inhaled—can cause respiratory illnesses such as asthma, bronchitis, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The microscopic fibres released during processing can irritate the lungs and exacerbate these conditions.

[24] https://www.microbiochemjournal.com/articles/ijcmbt-aid1025.php

Skin Problems and Allergies

Exposure to dust: factories that process natural fibres such as cotton may generate airborne dust particles, which—when inhaled—can cause respiratory illnesses such as asthma, bronchitis, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The microscopic fibres released during processing can irritate the lungs and exacerbate these conditions.

Physical Injuries

Accidents and injuries: workers who operate heavy machinery are exposed to the risk of physical injuries, including cuts, bruises and accidental harm. In addition, repetitive tasks and prolonged sitting associated with certain job roles may lead to musculoskeletal problems, including back and joint pain

Neurological Effects

Exposure to heavy metals: some textile processes involve the use of heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, and mercury, which can cause significant neurological damage. Long-term exposure to these substances can lead to memory loss, attention difficulties, headaches, and irritability.

Health Risks for Consumers

Exposure to Toxic Chemicals in Clothing

Many garments—especially those treated to be wrinkle-resistant or moth-proof contain formaldehyde, a carcinogenic substance.

Formaldehyde can cause skin irritation, watery eyes, sore throat, and breathing difficulties.

Long-term exposure is associated with an increased risk of respiratory cancers[25]

Skin Allergies and Irritations

Synthetic fabrics: clothing made from synthetic fibres such as polyester, nylon, and acrylic often contains chemicals that can trigger allergic reactions.

Consumers may experience: redness, itching, rashes, eczema—especially those with sensitive skin.

Dyes and other chemicals: even low concentrations of dyes and processing chemicals can remain in fabrics and cause irritation or allergic reactions after prolonged contact with the skin. Wearing poorly manufactured garments dyed with low-quality colourants increases the likelihood of skin problems.

Health Effects of Microplastics

Microplastics in clothing: Synthetic fabrics such as polyester release microplastics into the environment during washing. These tiny particles can be absorbed through the skin or ingested if they enter the food or water supply. The presence of microplastics in the body is associated with inflammation, hormonal disruptions, and potential cancer development.

[25] https://www.caszazemljo.si/beseda-o-zemlji/kemikalije-v-oblacilih-kako-se-izogniti-tveganjem.html

Toxic Burden from Textiles

Chemical accumulation: constant exposure to clothing treated with harmful chemicals (such as pesticides, dyes, and formaldehyde) can lead to the gradual buildup of these toxins in the body. Over time, this can result in chronic conditions such as hormonal imbalances, neurological disorders, and an increased risk of cancer.

Mehanske poškodbe zaradi slabo prilegajočih se oblačil

Discomfort and skin damage: wearing ill-fitting clothes – whether too tight or too loose – can lead to skin damage, such as chafing, inflammation, or excessive sweating. Wearing clothing made from sustainable materials, like organic cotton, can help reduce these issues and promote better skin health.

Combined Health Risks for Workers and Consumers

Both workers and consumers face serious health risks from the textile industry — from chemical exposure and skin irritation to respiratory issues and long-term illnesses such as cancer.
There is a critical need for safer and more sustainable practices to protect human health, whether through improving working conditions or by making environmentally responsible consumer choices.[26]

LIFE CYCLE OF A PRODUCT (T-SHIRT):

The primary material used to make a T-shirt is cotton, a fibre that has been integral to clothing production for centuries. Cotton thrives in tropical and subtropical climates—regions with consistently warm temperatures (18–28°C) and adequate water availability. Traditional cotton farming relies heavily on chemical fertilisers and pesticides, which can harm the environment.
These chemicals penetrate the soil, contaminate groundwater, and pose risks to the health of agricultural workers. However, cotton can also be grown organically, using natural agricultural methods instead of chemicals.
This not only benefits the environment but also improves labour conditions.
Organic cotton currently represents around 1% of global cotton production, but the share is steadily increasing.

Cotton Harvesting:

The cotton plant produces bolls filled with seeds coated in fine white fibres.
When ripe, the bolls burst open and the fibres are ready for harvest.

[26] https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10934529.2025.2514406

In large monoculture farms, harvesting is usually mechanised, often preceded by chemical defoliation to make leaves fall off. On smaller organic farms, cotton is typically picked by hand. Although this is labour-intensive, it eliminates the need for harmful chemicals. Hand-picked cotton is often higher quality because workers select only fully ripe bolls. Unfortunately, this work is often poorly paid, and child labour is sometimes involved in traditional cotton harvesting.

To ensure the T-shirt fits well, a small amount of elastane is added to cotton. Elastane, like polyester, is derived from petroleum. Although it provides benefits—fast drying, shape retention, easy care—its production is linked to environmental harm due to oil extraction and transportation. Moreover, petroleum is a finite resource. A more sustainable alternative is the development of textile fibres made from cellulose extracted from wood.

Spinning and Weaving:

After harvesting, cotton fibres are cleaned and pressed into bales.
These bales are transported to spinning mills, where cotton is blended with elastane and spun into yarn. Modern machinery typically performs the spinning process, producing fine cotton threads. The threads are then woven into fabric. In Fairtrade systems, farmers receive higher compensation for cotton and workers are paid fairly under safe working conditions. Unfortunately, many factories do not follow these standards.

Fabric Processing:

Before fabric can be sewn into a t-shirt, it undergoes several finishing processes, such as bleaching, dyeing, or treatment with chemicals to improve its appearance, texture, and durability. Some dyes contain heavy metals, which are harmful to both the environment and human health. Moreover, these chemicals often end up in untreated wastewater due to insufficient regulations in certain countries. However, natural dyes, though less vibrant and durable, are a more eco-friendly and safer option.

Cutting and Sewing:

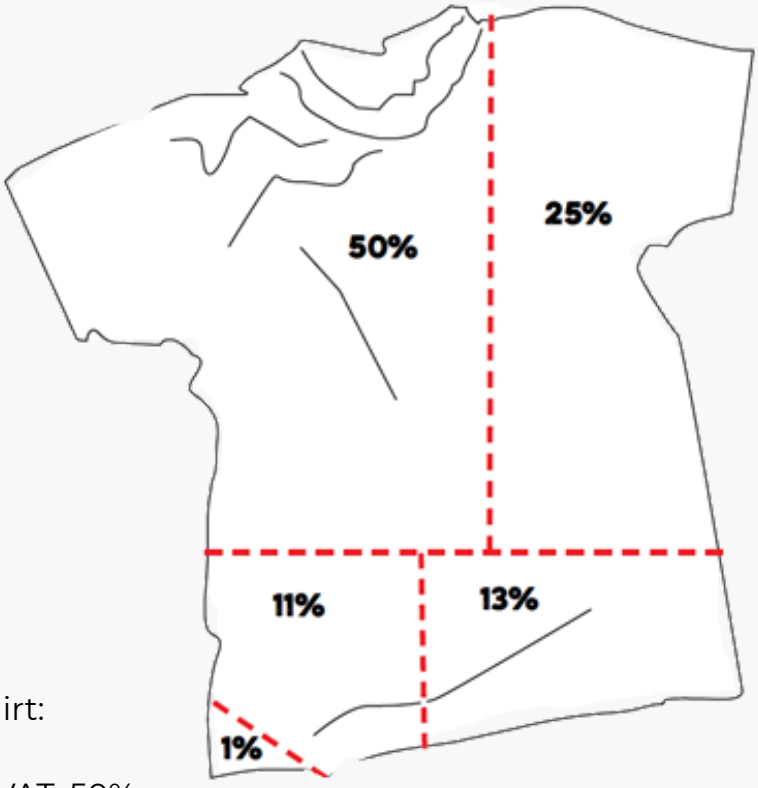
In the final stages of production, the fabric is cut and sewn into the individual components of a T-shirt. This is a labour-intensive process and represents a significant part of production costs. Many companies choose to manufacture their garments in countries with low labour costs, such as Bangladesh or China, where workers—often young women—work long hours for very low wages. In some cases, factories do not meet basic safety standards, and job security is minimal. Fair Trade garments ensure that workers are paid fair wages and work in safer and more ethical conditions.

Transportation:

Once the T-shirt has been fully produced, it is packaged and shipped to its destination. The journey involves several stages, including transportation of cotton from the field to the spinning mill. This long supply chain consumes large amounts of oil and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, which are partly responsible for climate change. Maritime transport, which accounts for more than 90% of global goods transport, has a very large environmental footprint, and improvements are still needed to reduce its impact.

Retail:

Finally, the T-shirt reaches the store, ready to be sold. Despite the many stages of its creation, consumers are often unaware of the conditions under which the product was made. In recent years, companies have become more conscious of implementing fair labour practices and environmental protection in their production processes. Eco-labels and Fair Trade certifications are now available to help identify such products, and many major brands have committed to environmental sustainability. Although this is an important first step, ongoing monitoring is essential to ensure these commitments are upheld.



Example:
Profit Distribution for a T-shirt:

- Retail, administration & VAT: 50%
- Brand, administration & advertising: 25%
- Material costs & factory profit in low-wage countries: 13%
- Transport & taxes: 11%
- **Wages of seamstresses & tailors: 1%**[27]

[27] https://www.statista.com/chart/34514/breakdown-of-the-retail-price-of-a-t-shirt/

MATERIALS USED IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

TThe textile industry uses a wide range of materials that can be categorised as natural, synthetic, or blended. Each material has different characteristics, advantages, and environmental and human health impacts.

The textile sector is a major source of pollution, as synthetic fibres such as polyester, nylon, and viscose contribute significantly to microplastic pollution and carbon emissions. Although cotton is a natural fibre, it still presents environmental challenges due to high water consumption and reliance on pesticides. To reduce negative impacts, the industry must adopt more sustainable practices, such as recycling, using environmentally friendly materials, and improving production methods.

The main source of microplastics is polyester, one of the most commonly used fibers, accounting for about 62% of global textile production. It is a major contributor to microplastic pollution (tiny plastic particles released during washing) in the ocean and significantly adds to carbon emissions during production.

Conventional cotton accounts for about 30% of global textile production, but it causes high environmental and social impacts due to excessive water consumption, pesticide use, and deforestation associated with its cultivation.[28]

Synthetic fibers, such as polyamides and acrylics, make up a smaller portion of the textile market, but still have a considerable environmental impact, particularly in terms of microplastic pollution.

Natural fibers, like silk, generally have a smaller environmental footprint in terms of pollution, though they can raise ethical concerns regarding animal welfare.

[28] https://fashion.sustainability-directory.com/question/what-are-the-environmental-impacts-of-cotton-and-polyester-production/

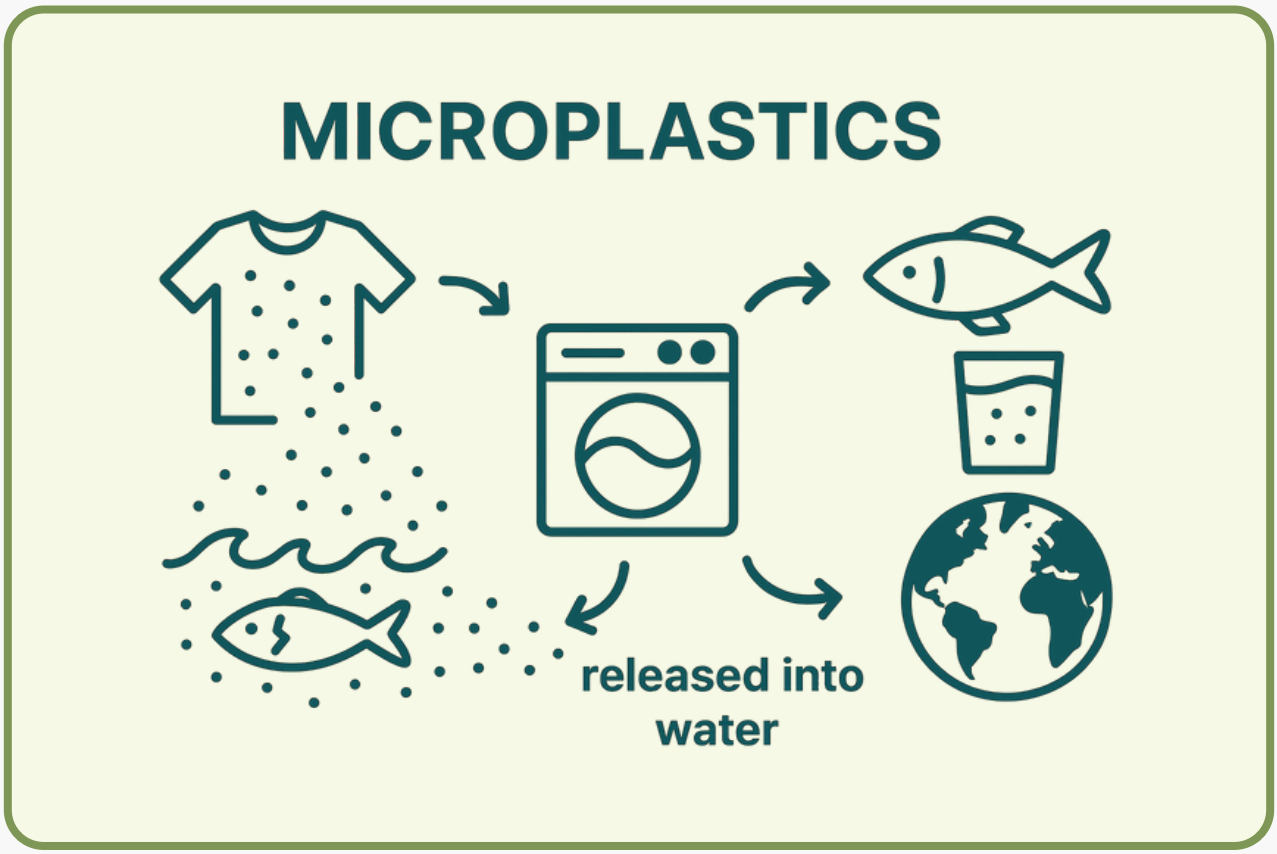
MOST COMMONLY USED MATERIALS IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Polyester is the most commonly used synthetic fibre in textiles, representing over 62% of all textile products worldwide.

Carbon footprint: polyester is produced from fossil fuels (petroleum-based derivatives). It is not biodegradable and contributes significantly to carbon emissions.. Its production is responsible for emitting approximately 3.6 billion tonnes of CO_2 per year.[29]

Non-biodegradable: polyester can take centuries to decompose in nature, adding to long-term textile waste accumulation.

Microplastics: When polyester fabrics are washed, they release microplastic particles into water systems. These particles pollute oceans and aquatic ecosystems.The textile industry contributes around 700,000 tonnes of microplastics annually, mainly from synthetic fibres released during washing.[30]



[29] https://changingmarkets.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CM-Fossil-Fashion-online-reports-layout.pdf
[30] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20201208STO93327/fast-fashion-eu-laws-for-sustainable-textile-consumption

Cotton remains one of the most widespread materials in the textile industry, representing around 30% of all textiles produced globally.
Water consumption: Producing one kilogram of cotton requires approximately 10,000 litres of water, which is especially concerning in arid regions where water resources are already scarce.
Pesticide use: Cotton cultivation accounts for roughly 25% of global pesticide consumption in agriculture. These chemicals can contaminate water sources and pose risks to both human health and the environment.[31]
Soil erosion: Intensive cotton farming can degrade soil, cause erosion, reduce soil fertility, and decrease biodiversity.
Social concerns: In regions where cotton is grown, farmers often face poor working conditions, which contributes to social inequality.

Viscose / Rayon is popular for its silky feel and cost efficiency, making it a widely used material in fashion.
Chemical usage: Producing viscose involves toxic chemicals such as carbon disulfide, which pose risks to both human health and the environment. In some regions, production processes lead to contamination of local water sources.
Deforestation: Viscose is often made from wood pulp, including pulp sourced from tropical forests, contributing to deforestation and long-term damage to sensitive ecosystems.[32]

[31] https://www.forbes.com/sites/brookerobertsislam/2021/12/06/silenced-data-means-we-dont-know-global-impacts-of-cotton-pesticides/
[32] https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-10/documents/cellulose-products_prelim-study_2011.pdf

Nylon is known for its durability and abrasion resistance and is another commonly used synthetic textile, although less widespread than polyester.
Carbon footprint: Like polyester, nylon is derived from fossil fuels, resulting in a high carbon footprint during production.
Microplastics: Nylon releases microplastic particles during washing, contaminating aquatic ecosystems similarly to polyester.
Low biodegradability: Nylon breaks down extremely slowly, leading to long-term environmental impacts as it persists in nature for decades or longer.

SUSTAINABLE TEXTILE MATERIALS

Sustainable materials are created with respect for the environment and human health. These materials generally: contain fewer harmful chemicals, are processed using environmentally responsible methods, and have significantly lower environmental and health impacts compared to conventional textile materials. Choosing sustainable fabrics offers numerous environmental and health benefits.

Environmental and Health Benefits of Sustainable Materials:

- **Reduced resource consumption:** Sustainable materials use fewer natural resources and require less energy and water during processing, resulting in a lower carbon footprint.
- **Avoidance of harmful chemicals:** Sustainable textiles do not contain toxic chemicals, helping to protect biodiversity and human health.
- **Reduction of textile waste:** Products made from sustainable materials are designed to last longer, reducing the need for frequent replacements and saving money in the long run.
- **Increased brand loyalty:** Companies prioritising sustainability often gain greater consumer trust and loyalty.
- **Encouragement of innovation:** The development of new sustainable materials promotes innovation, helps the industry evolve, and prevents environmental stagnation.
- **Long-term stability:** Companies that adopt sustainable practices are better prepared to meet future environmental challenges, ensuring long-term resilience and success.

Most Commonly Used Sustainable Textile Materials:

Natural Fibres

When grown and processed using environmentally friendly methods, natural fibres can be a highly sustainable choice.

Organic cotton	Grown without synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, helping reduce soil and water pollution.
Linen (flax)	Requires significantly less water and fewer chemicals than conventional cotton while remaining durable and biodegradable.
Hemp	A fast-growing plant with low environmental impact, thriving with minimal water and without pesticides.
Wool	When ethically sourced through responsible farming practices, wool is renewable and biodegradable.
Silk	When produced using ethical methods, such as Ahimsa (peace) silk that avoids harming silkworms, it can be a sustainable option.

Regenerated Fibres

These fibres originate from natural raw materials but are chemically processed into textile fibres.

Tencel™ (Lyocell)	Made from eucalyptus or beech wood cellulose and produced in a closed-loop system that reduces waste and pollution.[33]
Modal	A fibre similar to Tencel™, primarily derived from beechwood.
Cupro	Made from cotton waste, offering a low-impact alternative to virgin cotton fibres.

[33] https://www.tencel.com/fibers

Recycled Materials

Recycling existing textiles and plastics helps conserve resources and reduces textile waste.

Recycled polyester	Made from plastic bottles or textile scraps, reducing dependence on virgin synthetic fibres.
Recycled wool	Processed and reused wool fibres for new textile products.
Recycled cotton	Created from discarded cotton fabrics or garments, helping reduce waste and energy use.

IInnovative and Alternative Materials

Advances in textile production are introducing plant-based and regenerated fibres designed with sustainability in mind.

Piñatex®	A leather alternative made from pineapple leaf waste.
Econyl®	Regenerated nylon made from discarded fishing nets, carpets, and other plastic waste.
Cactus leather	A plant-based alternative to animal leather, produced from cactus fibres.
Plant-based textiles	Created from agricultural by-products such as corn husks or sugarcane waste. Natural dyes and non-toxic processing.

Using natural dyes and avoiding toxic chemicals during textile processing reduces environmental impact and supports a more sustainable fashion industry. By choosing environmentally friendly materials, the textile sector can shift toward more responsible production methods, reducing pollution, waste, and resource consumption.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS:

Sustainable materials benefit human health by reducing exposure to harmful chemicals commonly found in synthetic and conventional fabrics. Their cultivation and production use far fewer toxic substances, contributing to healthier skin, lungs, and overall wellbeing.

1. Free from Toxic Chemicals

Conventional fabrics like cotton often contain pesticides, herbicides, dyes, and formaldehyde, which can irritate the skin, lungs, and internal organs.

In contrast, sustainable materials such as organic cotton, hemp, bamboo, and linen are grown without these chemicals, reducing risks of: allergies, skin irritation, respiratory issues, long-term health problems such as cancer.

No microplastic pollution: synthetic fibres like polyester release microplastics during washing, which can harm both the environment and human health.

Sustainable fibres such as cotton, wool, and silk do not release microplastics, reducing the associated health risks.

2. Reduced Risk of Allergies and Skin Problems

Less skin irritation: harsh chemicals used in conventional textile production can cause rashes, itching, eczema, and other skin issues. Sustainable materials are gentler on the skin.

Organic cotton, hemp, and bamboo are hypoallergenic, making them ideal for people with sensitive skin or conditions like eczema.

Better for sensitive skin: many natural fibres are soft and free of irritants, making them a safer and more comfortable choice for individuals with skin disorders.

3. Better for Respiratory Health

Fewer airborne pollutants: conventional textile production—especially of synthetic fabrics—releases harmful fumes that irritate the respiratory system. Sustainable materials such as organic cotton, wool, and linen release fewer pollutants during processing, reducing the risk of respiratory problems.

Natural fibres: choosing fabrics such as linen, hemp, and bamboo ensures that clothing is made from fibres far less likely to emit harmful substances into the air, supporting better lung health.

4. Supporting a Healthier Environment

Reducing environmental toxins: sustainable farming methods avoid harmful chemicals and reduce contamination of soil, water, and air.

By contrast, conventional farming—especially for cotton—relies heavily on pesticides and synthetic fertilisers, which can pollute ecosystems and food chains. By choosing sustainable materials, we help reduce environmental pollutants, ultimately improving public health.

5. Improving the Health of Workers and Producers
Safer working conditions: workers in the conventional textile industry are often exposed to harmful chemicals. Sustainable materials eliminate many of these toxins, creating safer and healthier working environments and reducing the risk of chemical-related illnesses for those involved in production.
Promoting ethical production: sustainable production methods focus not only on environmental impact but also on improving workers' wellbeing and ensuring healthier conditions throughout the supply chain.

6. Reducing the Risk of Chronic Illnesses
Lower long-term health risks: by reducing exposure to harmful chemicals, sustainable fabrics help decrease the risk of chronic diseases such as respiratory problems, heart disease, cancer, and hormonal disorders. Organic and natural fibres — free from artificial treatments and toxic dyes — are a healthier option for everyday clothing.

7. Supporting Health Through Ethical Consumption
Less stress and more peace of mind: choosing sustainable materials contributes to a healthier environment and supports ethical practices, which can positively affect mental and emotional wellbeing. Knowing your choices benefit both your health and the planet reduces anxiety connected to pollution and unethical production.

Choosing sustainable materials not only improves personal health but also protects the health of the planet and of the workers who make our clothes. Sustainable fabrics help build a better future for everyone by linking fashion with responsibility.

CONVENTIONAL COTTON VS. ORGANIC COTTON: HEALTH IMPACTS

Organic cotton is significantly more environmentally friendly and health-safe than conventional cotton.
Its cultivation uses up to 90% less water, mostly through natural rainfall. It is grown without pesticides, herbicides, or synthetic fertilisers, reducing soil, river, and groundwater pollution. Compared to conventional cotton, organic farming: produces a much smaller carbon footprint, preserves soil fertility, supports biodiversity, requires up to 60% less energy, as no energy-intensive chemical production is needed.
Human health benefits are substantial: workers are not exposed to hazardous pesticides, ensuring safer working conditions and fewer health risks in local communities. Products made from organic cotton are often softer, higher quality, and more durable.
Key advantage: lower resource use, healthier cultivation, and better-quality products that support a sustainable textile industry.

Reduced Exposure to Toxic Chemicals
No synthetic pesticides or herbicides: Organic cotton is grown without the use of harmful chemicals like organophosphates and carbamates, which are commonly used in conventional cotton farming. These pesticides are linked to various health issues, including cancer, neurological disorders, hormonal imbalances, and allergies. By choosing organic cotton, consumers reduce the risk of these toxic substances entering the body through skin contact or ingestion.
No chemical fertilizers: Organic cotton is cultivated without synthetic fertilizers that can pollute the soil and water sources. The absence of these chemicals means fewer toxins in our environment, ultimately reducing the likelihood of exposure to harmful substances.

Reduced Risk of Allergies and Skin Irritation

Fewer chemicals in clothing: Conventional cotton is often treated with chemicals such as formaldehyde, various dyes, glitter, and pesticides. These chemicals can be released into the air or come into contact with the skin, leading to allergic reactions, rashes, and other skin irritations. In contrast, organic cotton is processed without these harmful chemicals, making it less likely to cause skin issues.

Gentler on sensitive skin: Organic cotton is often recommended for individuals with sensitive skin or conditions such as eczema and psoriasis. Free from harsh chemicals, organic cotton is softer and less irritating, providing a safer and more comfortable option for those prone to skin reactions

Better for Respiratory Health

Fewer chemicals in the air: The processing of conventional cotton releases toxic chemicals into the air, which can pose risks to workers on cotton fields and in factories. Organic cotton, due to more natural processing methods, reduces the amount of harmful substances in the air. This not only helps protect the respiratory health of factory workers but also reduces the risk of respiratory issues in communities near cotton farms.

Healthier working conditions for cotton workers: Organic cotton farming and production typically involve fewer harmful chemicals, creating safer and healthier working conditions for farmworkers and factory employees. This reduces exposure to dangerous pesticides, fertilizers, and other toxic substances, improving overall worker well-being and safety.

Healthier Working Conditions

Workers on conventional cotton farms are often exposed to harmful pesticides and herbicides, which can be inhaled or absorbed through the skin. This exposure can cause immediate health problems, such as poisoning, as well as long-term issues like reduced fertility and chronic diseases. Organic cotton farming, which prevents the use of these toxic substances, ensures safer working conditions and improves the health of workers and surrounding communities.

In addition, organic cotton production significantly reduces the risk of water pollution from chemical runoff.

Reducing exposure to microplastics: Organic cotton is naturally free from synthetic fibers, meaning it does not contribute to microplastic pollution. This makes it a more environmentally friendly choice, helping to reduce the amount of microplastics released into the water and atmosphere from the textile industry.

No synthetic additives

Unlike conventional cotton clothing, which often contains synthetic fibers like polyester and acrylic, organic cotton is completely natural. Synthetic fibers are known to release microplastics during washing, contributing to environmental pollution and potentially entering the body through skin contact or inhalation. Organic cotton, which does not contain such synthetic materials, helps reduce exposure to microplastics.

Reduced water and soil contamination

Since organic cotton is grown without harmful chemicals, it is less likely to contaminate the soil and water. This results in fewer toxins entering the food chain, which can otherwise have long-term effects on the health of humans and wildlife. Organic farming practices help preserve the integrity of natural ecosystems and reduce the negative health impacts caused by chemical pollution.

Health Benefits for Children and Infants

Safer for sensitive skin: Babies and young children have more sensitive skin than adults, making them more prone to irritation and allergic reactions. Organic cotton, which is free from harmful chemicals, is an excellent choice for children's clothing. It reduces the risk of skin irritation, making it a safer and more comfortable option for babies and young children.

WHAT IS GREENWASHING

As consumers increasingly seek environmentally friendly options, some companies exploit this demand through false green marketing, or greenwashing. This term refers to the practice of companies making exaggerated or misleading claims about the environmental benefits of their products or practices in order to appear more sustainable than they actually are. While companies may advertise clothing or products as biodegradable, sustainable, or eco-friendly, they often fail to back up these promises with meaningful actions or verifiable practices.[34]

[34] https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/greenwashing

How Does Greenwashing Work?

Greenwashing can take many forms — from obvious lies to vague, incomplete or misleading statements. Common tactics in the fashion industry include launching a small "eco-friendly" collection, such as jeans made with slightly less water, while ignoring far more serious environmental problems across the rest of the company's production. This creates the illusion of overall sustainability, even though major environmental issues remain unresolved.

KEY CERTIFICATIONS THAT HELP CONSUMERS AVOID GREENWASHING

Greenwashing is effective only when it successfully misleads consumers.
To prevent this, regulatory bodies — especially in Europe — are tightening rules regarding environmental claims and sustainability labels.
Consumers can also take proactive steps to avoid being deceived by carefully checking labels, certifications, and product descriptions.

Below are some trustworthy sustainability certifications to look for when purchasing clothing:

Global Recycled Standard (GOTS)

is the leading standard for organic textiles, ensuring that at least 95% of a product is made from certified organic fibers. Products with the GOTS label also meet strict criteria regarding safe working conditions and fair wages, including prohibitions on forced labor and guarantees of workers' rights to freedom of association and a healthy working environment. This certification provides consumers with assurance that the product is not only environmentally friendly but also produced under ethical and humane conditions.[35]

[35] https://global-standard.org/certification-and-labelling/certification

Global Recycled Standard (GRS)
certifies products made from at least 20% recycled materials. It ensures that manufacturers reduce harmful environmental impacts and maintain ethical working conditions. This certification also promotes transparency in production processes and responsible sourcing. By encouraging the use of recycled materials, the GRS helps drive sustainability in the supply chain, providing consumers with confidence that the products they purchase have a lower environmental footprint and are produced responsibly.[36]

PETA-Approved Vegan
The PETA logo, issued by the animal rights organization, is a mark of approval for products that are vegan and cruelty-free. This certification is used by over 1,000 companies worldwide that produce vegan clothing and accessories, including items that do not use animal materials such as leather, silk, and fur.[37]

Fair Wear Foundation
The Fair Wear Foundation is a non-profit organization that advocates for workers' rights in the global apparel industry, ensuring safety, dignity, and fair wages. They focus on improving working conditions, particularly for the millions of women working in the garment sector. The foundation's approach is based on human rights and continuous efforts to address issues such as poor working conditions. Through collaboration with brands and manufacturers, the Fair Wear Foundation aims to create lasting, positive change in the textile industry, promoting fairness and social responsibility.[38]
As the demand for sustainable products grows, it is essential for consumers to recognise greenwashing and its influence on the market.
By staying informed and looking for credible certifications, individuals can make better purchasing decisions and support a fashion industry that is more transparent, ethical, and environmentally responsible.

[36] https://www.scsglobalservices.com/services/global-recycled-standard
[37] https://petaapprovedvegan.peta.org/
[38] https://www.fairwear.org/resources/

EXPLANATION OF NEW CONCEPTS:

Sustainable Materials	The fashion industry is increasingly shifting toward sustainable materials such as organic cotton, hemp, and recycled fibres. These materials help reduce the environmental footprint by lowering the need for harmful pesticides and decreasing waste through recycling.
Eco-Friendly Dyeing and Finishing	Advances in environmentally friendly dyeing techniques , such as waterless dyeing and plant-based dyes, significantly reduce the harmful effects of traditional chemical dyes. These innovations help prevent water pollution and reduce the release of toxic substances into the environment.
Fair Labour Practices	More companies are implementing fair labour practices to ensure better working conditions in textile factories. This includes providing safer environments, fair wages, and reducing health risks caused by exposure to toxic chemicals, all of which improve worker wellbeing and contribute to sustainable production.
Awareness of Greenwashing	Greenwashing occurs when brands falsely claim to be environmentally friendly in order to attract eco-conscious consumers. This practice misleads the public, undermines genuine sustainability efforts, and contributes to consumer distrust and environmental harm.
Health Risks of Flame Retardants in Clothing	Some flame retardants used in children's clothing and textiles have been linked to hormonal disruption, developmental delays, and cancer. These chemicals often remain in fabrics even after washing and can leach into the environment, posing long-term health risks for both consumers and workers.
Environmental Impact of Fast Fashion Overproduction	Fast fashion brands frequently overproduce clothing, leading to excessive textile waste and unsustainable landfill accumulation. The constant demand for new collections also contributes to deforestation, water scarcity, and the exploitation of low-paid labour, intensifying environmental and social issues worldwide.

RESPONSIBLE CHOICE

4.3. MODULE 3

4.3. MODULE 3 – RESPONSIBLE CHOICE

OBJECTIVES	Upon completing the module, participants will: • understand sustainable materials, certifications and good practices in the fashion and textile industry, and recognize their importance for protecting the environment and human health; • be able to identify misleading environmental claims (greenwashing) and develop the ability to critically assess sustainability-related advertisements, labels and promotional messages; • become aware of the impact of personal decisions on the environment, society and the economy, and understand the role of the individual in the transition toward more sustainable consumption; • learn how individual consumer behaviour can influence sustainability and be able to identify concrete changes in their own daily lives; • acquire practical tools and ideas for reducing textile waste and prolonging the lifespan of clothing; • develop a sense of personal responsibility and willingness to transfer sustainable practices into the community (e.g., clothing swaps, workshops, community actions).
TEACHING METHODS	lecture, discussion, video analysis, workshop
TEACHING FORMS	frontal instruction: the instructor leads the work of the entire group group work: participants are divided into smaller groups pair work: participants work in pairs individual work: independent work
TEACHING MATERIALS AND **TOOLS**	PPT presentation, video clips, photographs, tables, online resources, leaflet, Kvadratni meter (learning material), Video: Slow Fashion and New Trends computer, projector, speaker, projection screen, printer, whiteboard, markers, glue, scissors
REFERENCES USED	• de[BK1] Castro, O. (2021). Loved Clothes Last: How the Joy of Rewearing and Repairing Your Clothes Can Be a Revolutionary Act. Penguin

REFERENCES USED	• Fundacija Ellen MacArthur. (2017). Novo tekstilno gospodarstvo: preoblikovanje prihodnosti mode. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 iz https:ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/a-novo-tekstilno-gospodarstvo • Modna revolucija. (2024). Indeks preglednosti mode. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 s https:www.modna revolucija.org/o/preglednost/ • Minney, S. (2016). Slow fashion: Inspirational stories for a sustainable future. HotHive Books. • Remake. (n.d.). Zgodbe, kampanje in izobraževanje za trajnostno modo. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 iz https:remake.svet • Koalicija za trajnostna oblačila. (n.d.). Orodja Higgovega indeksa. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 iz https:apparelcoalition.org/the-higg-index/ • Thomas, D. (2019). Fashionopolis: The price of fast fashion and the future of clothes. Penguin Press. • Zavezništvo Združenih narodov za trajnostno modo.(n.d.). Spodbujanje trajnostne modne industrije. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 iz https:unfashionalliance.Org Skupni cilj. (n.d.). Trajnostni modni viri in orodja. Pridobljeno 7. aprila 2025 s https:www.skupni cilj.Co
DURATION	3 teaching hours

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS
Activities
1. Introduction: Viewing of the Video SLOW FASHION AND NEW TRENDS (25 min) Briefly recap the content from the previous module. This is followed by viewing the video Slow Fashion and New Trends, available at link. **2. Chemicals in the Textile Industry and Their Impact on Health (30 min)** Present the **consequences of using various chemicals** in the textile industry and their **effects on the health of workers and consumers**. The theoretical section of this module provides a detailed overview of the types of chemicals, their uses and their impacts on the environment and human health. Udeleženci naj pripravijo **primerjalno tabelo** najpogosteje uporabljenih **kemikalij**, v katero vključijo njihov **namen, vpliv na zdravje ter možne trajnostne alternative.**

A more detailed description of the activity is available in **Chapter 6 under the title** 5. učni pripomoček: Razprava o kemikaljah v oblačilih
Additional information on chemicals in textiles can be found at the following links:
• Undesirable chemicals in sportswear and equipment – ZPS
• Environmental footprint of different types of fibres
• Chemicals in underwear

3. Responsible Purchasing and Maintenance of Textiles (40 min)
V teoretičnem delu tega modula so predstavljene ključne informacije o odgovornem nakupovanju tekstila, vzdrževanju oblačil ter branju in razumevanju tekstilnih etiket.
The presentation can be enhanced by making a **no-sew shopping bag**, providing participants with practical insight into textile reuse.
Instructions for making the bag are available at the provided link

ADDITIONAL OPTION:
If suitable conditions are available (e.g., a sewing machine), you may invite a seamstress or another **textile expert** to join the execution of this module.

Together with participants, you can conduct practical activities such as **mending clothing, patching, shortening, replacing elastic bands, and making bags, cushion covers or other simple textile items**.
Such an approach enables participants to gain hands-on experience in reviving garments and encourages more sustainable habits in their everyday lives.

4. Examples of Good Practices in the Textile Industry (15 min)
Present examples of good practices in sustainable textile management that illustrate innovative, responsible and environmentally friendly approaches in the fashion industry and broader society.
A more detailed description of individual examples is provided in Chapter 5. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTISE

5. Reflection and Preparation for Independent Work (15-20 min)
Conclude the third module with a discussion and by announcing the content of the next module.
Examples of reflection questions:
• **Which idea or example of good practice inspired me the most and why?**
(Encourages recognition of personal motivation and connection with real examples.)
• **What changes could I introduce into my daily life to extend the lifespan of my clothing and reduce the amount of waste?**
(Guides participants toward practical actions—repair, swapping, responsible washing, choosing quality.)

• **How can chemicals used in textile processing (dyes, softeners, anti-wrinkle agents, etc.) affect our health—and what can I do to avoid them?**
(Encourages thinking about personal responsibility, health and the importance of choosing natural, certified materials).

Present the booklet **THE THEORY OF THE SQUARE METER**, available at link

Provide instructions for independent work within **MODULE 4,** or present the content of the online learning component.

CHEMICALS IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY AND THEIR IMPACT ON HEALTH

Chemicals used in textile production can pose a serious risk to human health, especially with long-term or repeated exposure. Workers involved in textile production and consumers wearing chemically treated clothing may experience a range of health problems, from skin irritation and allergies to more severe conditions such as cancer and respiratory diseases.

Below is an overview of the most commonly used chemicals in the textile industry and the associated health risks:

Pesticides

Pesticides are commonly used in growing cotton and other textile crops to protect them from pests.[39]
Acute poisoning: Short-term exposure can cause symptoms such as headaches, nausea, dizziness, tremors and increased heart rate.
Chronic effects: Long-term exposure may increase the risk of neurological disorders, hormonal imbalances, cancer and respiratory problems.
Cancer risk: Some pesticides, particularly organophosphates, have been linked to higher rates of cancers such as prostate, lung and skin cancer.[41]

Formaldehid

Formaldehyde is commonly used as an anti-wrinkle agent and preservative in fabrics such as cotton, polyester and nylon.
Respiratory problems: It is a strong respiratory irritant. Short-term exposure can cause coughing, shortness of breath, burning eyes and sore throat.
Carcinogenicity: Formaldehyde is classified as a carcinogen and is associated with an increased risk of cancers, especially in the nasal cavity, throat and lungs.
Skin reactions: Long-term exposure can cause skin allergies, dermatitis and irritation of the eyes and mucous membranes.[40]

Chlorine

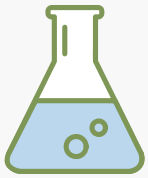
Chlorine is often used in the bleaching process of fabrics, especially cotton, and for sterilisation.
Respiratory issues: Exposure to chlorine gas or chlorine compounds can irritate the respiratory system, leading to coughing, shortness of breath and burning eyes.
Chronic respiratory conditions: Long-term exposure may cause asthma, bronchitis and other lung diseases.
Skin damage: Chlorine is aggressive and can cause chemical burns or skin irritation upon direct contact.[41]

[39] https://mesec.si/nevarnosti-v-vodi-pesticidi/
[40] https://nijz.si/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/UCBENIK-JZ-KONCNA.pdf
[41] https://www.prvagim.si/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Kemikalije.pdf

Azo Dyes

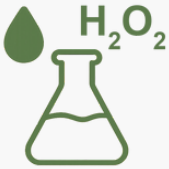
Azo dyes are frequently used because they are inexpensive and produce vibrant colours. Some can break down into harmful compounds.
Carcinogenicity: Certain azo dyes can degrade into toxic substances such as benzene and aniline, both known carcinogens. Workers exposed to these dyes face a higher risk of specific cancers.
Skin reactions: Azo dyes may cause skin irritation and allergic reactions such as dermatitis and redness.[42]

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)



PFAS chemicals are used to make fabrics water- and stain-resistant, especially in outerwear, sportswear and protective clothing.
Hormonal disruption: PFAS are known endocrine disruptors that affect hormonal balance, including sex hormones and thyroid function.
Elevated blood pressure: Long-term exposure has been linked to high blood pressure, increased cardiovascular risk and elevated cholesterol levels.
Carcinogenicity: Studies indicate that prolonged exposure may increase the risk of certain cancers.[43]

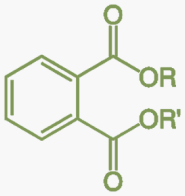
Acid Bleaching (Hydrogen Peroxide)



Acid compounds such as hydrogen peroxide are commonly used in the bleaching process to remove colour from fabrics like cotton, wool and silk.
Skin and eye irritation: Strong acids can cause severe skin burns and serious eye damage upon contact.
Respiratory issues: Inhalation of vapours produced during bleaching can irritate the respiratory system, causing coughing and breathing difficulties.[44]

[42] https://health.ec.europa.eu/other-pages/health-sc-basic-page/opinion-azo-colorants-toys-writing-inks-and-paper-products_en
[43] https://pugnalom.io/sl/studie-pfas-im-blut-allgegenwartig/
[44] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hydrogen-peroxide-properties-incident-management-and-toxicology/hydrogen-peroxide-toxicological-overview

Phthalates



Phthalates are used in the production of flexible plastics, including those found in clothing and accessories such as shoes, raincoats and bags.
Hormonal disruption: Phthalates are endocrine disruptors and can affect hormone production, particularly testosterone. This can have long-term effects on reproductive health.
Health issues: Exposure to phthalates has been linked to an increased risk of asthma, allergies, developmental problems in children and even cancer.[45]

Chemicals commonly used in the textile industry can have a wide range of harmful effects on human health. From acute reactions such as poisoning or skin irritation to long-term risks including cancer, respiratory diseases and hormonal disruptions, the impact of these substances cannot be overlooked.
These health risks highlight the urgent need for the industry to transition to safer and more sustainable practices—such as the use of natural dyes, organic farming methods, and the reduction or elimination of toxic chemicals from textile production.
Both workers and consumers benefit from a cleaner, healthier textile industry with fewer harmful chemicals and more environmentally friendly alternatives.

HOW DO WE SHOP RESPONSIBLY?

Responsible purchasing is a key step in supporting sustainable development. Through conscious decisions, consumers can reduce their environmental footprint, promote ethical labour practices and contribute to healthier and more sustainable communities.
Responsible purchasing includes:

- Choosing products with a lower environmental impact
- Supporting companies that uphold ethical labour standards
- Reducing waste by investing in high-quality, long-lasting products
- Recognising sustainable textile brands that prioritize environmental and social responsibilityti.[46]

[45] https://www.tavcarjevi.si/wp-content/uploads/66td-2024-ipim.pdf
[46] https://premiumferme.com/sl/pages/sustainability

Practical Tips for Responsible Shopping

Review material labels
Check labels on products to determine which materials were used. Look for natural or recycled fibres and avoid items made from synthetic materials that are harmful to the environment.

Check certifications
Look for reputable certifications such as the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), Fair Trade, or the Global Recycled Standard (GRS). These labels ensure that the product meets specific environmental and social criteria.

Research ethical manufacturing practices
Do some research to understand a brand's ethical standards. Determine whether they follow fair labour practices, provide safe working conditions and pay fair wages to their workers.

Support local and small producers
Sustainable brands often collaborate with local artisans and produce smaller batches of products that generate less waste. Supporting local businesses also reduces environmental transport costs and promotes fair compensation for workers.

Check for circular models
Brands embracing the circular economy focus on extending product lifespans by offering return or recycling programs.

Evaluate packaging
Sustainable brands typically use minimal or recycled packaging. If a product arrives in excessive or plastic packaging, it may indicate less environmentally friendly practices.

Look for transparent communication
Truly sustainable brands pride themselves on transparency. They provide information such as product composition, raw material origins and data on environmental impact, including the carbon footprint of their products.

Health and sustainability
Sustainable shopping also considers the health effects of products. Look for brands that avoid harmful chemicals and focus on natural fibres such as organic cotton, wool and linen. These materials are healthier for both people and the planet.

Seek community insights
Check online reviews, sustainability forums and blogs to hear from other consumers about the practices of specific brands. A genuinely sustainable brand will have a strong, positive reputation built on transparency and social responsibility.

Maintenance and repair to extend product lifespan
Check whether a brand offers garment repair services. Regular maintenance and timely repairs can reduce the need for new purchases, save money and lower environmental impact. Investing in quality products and taking good care of them reduces waste.

Adapt your personal style for a sustainable wardrobe
A sustainable wardrobe does not require giving up style or fashion. Instead, it encourages a thoughtful approach to purchasing: focusing on high-quality, versatile pieces that suit your personal style and have a positive environmental impact.

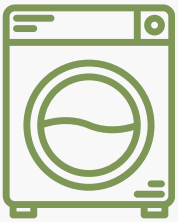
HOW TO MAINTAIN TEXTILES?

Sustainable garment care involves handling clothing in ways that extend its lifespan, reduce the need for frequent replacements and minimise environmental impact.
Proper washing, storage, repair and renewal can help reduce resource consumption and environmental pollution. By incorporating these practices into your routine, you can help decrease your overall ecological footprint.

Practical Tips for Sustainable Textile Care:

Proper Washing of Clothing

Proper garment care is essential for ensuring long garment life and reducing negative environmental impacts. By washing and maintaining your clothes thoughtfully, you can keep them looking good and functional for longer, while also lowering water and energy use and reducing microplastic release.



Follow care labels: always check the care labels for washing instructions. They guide you on temperature settings and ideal washing methods to preserve garments.

Wash at lower temperatures: washing at 30–40 °C saves energy and reduces fabric wear. It also helps prevent shrinking and fading.

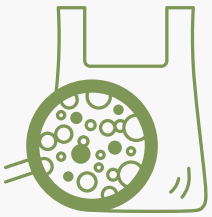
Practical Tips for Sustainable Textile Care:

Separate colours and fabrics: sort clothes by colour and fabric type to prevent damage and ensure thorough cleaning without unnecessary wear.[47]

Wash less frequently: frequent washing causes fabric wear and, in the case of synthetic materials, releases microplastics that pollute aquatic ecosystems. If clothes are not visibly dirty or do not smell unpleasant, they can be worn several times before washing. This not only protects the materials but also saves water and energy.

Use environmentally friendly detergents: choose detergents that do not contain harmful chemicals and are biodegradable. Such detergents reduce environmental pollution while keeping fabrics soft and colours vibrant for longer.

Capture microplastics: when washing synthetic fabrics such as polyester or nylon, use special laundry bags or filters that capture plastic microfibres. This prevents microplastics from entering river and marine ecosystems.



[47] https://www.aeg.si/discover/blog/sustainability/the-30-degree-washing-guide-for-energy-savings-and-clothing-care/

Practical Tips for Sustainable Textile Care:

Proper Care for Longer Garment Life:

- Wash clothes at lower temperatures whenever the fabric type allows.
- Air-dry garments instead of using a tumble dryer, as high temperatures damage fibres.
- Store clothing in ways that prevent deformation and wear—for example, fold delicate items and garments that stretch easily, and hang sturdier pieces appropriately.
- Regularly check buttons, zippers and seams and repair them as needed to prevent more serious damage.

Mindful washing: before every wash, assess whether it is really necessary. If a garment is not dirty, you can wear it again or use fabric refreshers that reduce the need for washing. This helps garments retain their quality for longer and reduces the use of resources.

By following these simple guidelines, you can significantly extend the life of your clothes, reduce your environmental impact and contribute to a more sustainable wardrobe.

Raising awareness is a key step—talk to friends and family and encourage them to reflect on the environmental and ethical consequences of their fashion choices. Adopting a sustainable fashion mindset is a process that does not happen overnight, but every thoughtful decision helps reduce the impact of our wardrobes on the planet. In this way, we not only protect the environment but also support a more ethical and sustainability-oriented fashion industry that can serve as a model for future generations.

Practical Tips for Sustainable Textile Care:

Use Environmentally Friendly Detergents

Avoid harsh chemicals: Choose biodegradable detergents free from phosphates and other harmful substances that can pollute water.

Opt for natural detergents: Using detergents made from natural ingredients ensures that washing is gentle on clothing and less harmful to the environment.

Microplastic-catching bags for synthetic fabrics: When washing synthetic garments such as polyester, nylon or acrylic, use bags designed to capture microplastics and prevent them from entering waterways.

Drying

Air-dry clothing: Whenever possible, hang garments to dry naturally instead of using a tumble dryer. Air drying uses less energy and is gentler on fabrics.

Avoid tumble dryers: Although convenient, dryers can damage delicate fabrics and contribute to increased energy consumption. Air drying helps preserve fabric quality.

Proper Storage

Correct storage of clothing: Proper storage is essential for maintaining the long-term condition of garments. Store clothes in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight and moisture. This helps prevent fabric damage, discolouration and wear.

Use sustainable hangers: Instead of plastic, use hangers made from wood, bamboo or other environmentally friendly materials that are less likely to damage fabrics.

Repair: Extending the Life of Your Textiles

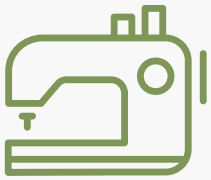
Repairs play a key role in sustainable textile management, as they reduce waste and the need for new garments. By extending the lifespan of clothing, repairs help reduce environmental impact and conserve resources.

Here are several key repair strategies for minor damage that can help you care for your clothes and reduce waste:

Sewing small holes: Small holes can easily be repaired with basic stitching. This is a simple and cost-effective way to keep garments in rotation without having to buy new ones.

Replacing buttons: When buttons fall off, they are easy to replace. This small fix can significantly extend the lifespan of shirts, jackets and trousers.

Replacing zippers: A broken zipper does not mean the end of a garment. Replacing the zipper on a jacket, bag or dress is a simple repair that restores functionality and appearance.



Hems: Garments with worn or frayed hems can be re-hemmed or even redesigned using decorative stitching. This not only repairs wear but also gives the piece a refreshed, personal look.

Upcycling Garments

Recycling or repurposing: Instead of discarding old clothing, turn it into something new. For example, an old T-shirt can become a reusable shopping bag, and fabric scraps can be used to create smaller items such as cushion covers or accessories.

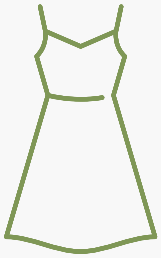
Using scrap fabric for repairs: If a garment is damaged over a larger area, consider using fabric from another garment to patch it. You can also add decorative elements such as embroidery, patches or studs to breathe new life into worn pieces.

REPAIR, EXTENDING TEXTILE LIFESPAN

Be Mindful When Choosing Fabrics

Choose natural materials: Natural fibres such as cotton, wool, linen, silk and hemp are biodegradable and have a smaller environmental footprint. By choosing these materials, you help ensure that your garments last longer and are more environmentally friendly.

Avoid non-degradable synthetics: Fabrics such as polyester, nylon and acrylic do not break down and release microplastics during washing. If you need to buy synthetic clothing, choose items made from recycled materials.



Repair and Care of Knitwear

Care of knitwear: Knitwear, known for its flexibility and durability, is relatively easy to maintain. Its natural elasticity helps prevent damage, and its moisture-absorbing properties make it more resistant to stains.

Repairing knits: If knitted items become damaged, try simple repairs using stitching, fabric glue or even crochet. Thanks to the stretch of the fabric, repairs are often less noticeable.

Sewing and Mending

Basic sewing skills: Learn to repair small holes and tears using basic sewing techniques. This simple skill can save you from having to replace damaged garments.

Use patches: For larger holes or tears, consider using fabric patches as a way to extend the life of clothing.

Sustainable Brands and Recycling

Support sustainable brands: Choose brands that prioritise durable, high-quality garments made from environmentally friendly materials and ensure ethical production processes.

Donate or recycle: Donate clothes you no longer wear to those in need, or recycle them through brands and shops that offer take-back or recycling programmes. This helps reduce waste and keeps garments in use for longer.

REPAIR, EXTENDING TEXTILE LIFESPAN

Benefits of Extending Textile Lifespan

Reduced resource consumption: By maintaining your clothes, you reduce demand for new textiles and conserve valuable natural resources.

Saving money: Repairing garments is more cost-effective than constantly buying new ones.

Less waste: Fewer clothes end up in landfills, helping to mitigate the growing problem of textile waste.

Additional Tips for Sustainable Textile Practices

Clothing swaps: Organise or participate in clothing swaps to refresh your wardrobe without using new resources.

Creative upcycling: Transform old garments into new items such as bags, cushions or even home décor.

By following these sustainable textile practices, you can significantly extend the life of your clothing, reduce environmental impact and contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle. Every small step helps reduce waste, conserve resources and protect the environment for future generations.

HOW DO WE READ LABELS?

Reading clothing labels is essential for making informed decisions about garment care, understanding the materials used and checking the sustainability or potential environmental impact of a product. Labels provide valuable insight into how to extend the lifespan of clothing, make environmentally conscious choices and protect your health and well-being.

Below is a guide to understanding labels more effectively:

Material Composition

Labels usually list the materials used to make the garment, which can reveal a lot about its environmental impact and how it feels when worn.

Look for: natural materials such as cotton, linen, wool, hemp and silk. Natural fibres typically breathe better, feel more comfortable on the skin and have a lower environmental impact when organically sourced.

Environmental impact: seek out materials such as organic cotton, recycled polyester or recycled cotton. These materials help reduce the need for virgin resources and decrease pollution.

Avoid synthetic materials like polyester and nylon when possible, as they are derived from fossil fuels and contribute to long-term environmental issues, including microplastic pollution.

Origin and Production Conditions

Some labels also indicate where a garment was made, offering insight into production quality and ethical standards:

Made in (Country): Labels such as “Made in Italy” often suggest high-quality materials and strict manufacturing standards. Labels like “Made in Bangladesh” may raise concerns about working conditions and low wages.

Local production: Locally produced items usually have a smaller carbon footprint, as transport emissions are reduced. Supporting local production is a sustainable choice.

Ethical manufacturing: Researching brands with transparent production practices ensures that garments are made in accordance with fair labour standards and environmental responsibility.

Certifications and Labels

Some garments carry certifications that indicate compliance with environmentally friendly or ethical standards:

- GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard): Indicates that the garment is made from organic cotton and meets strict environmental and social criteria during production.
- OEKO-TEX® Standard 100: Ensures that the fabric has been tested for harmful chemicals and is safe for human use.
- Fair Trade: Signifies that workers were fairly paid and that ethical labour practices were followed.
- Bluesign®: Ensures that the garment was produced in an environmentally safe and responsible manner.
- Cradle to Cradle®: A certification promoting circular economy practices, ensuring products are designed with sustainability in mind.[48]

[48] https://www.zps.si/nasveti-in-vodniki/najpomembnejsi-certifikati-na-podrocju-tekstila-2023-02-02

Recycling and Sustainability Information

Some labels include information on how the garment aligns with circular economy principles:

Recycled materials: If a garment is made from recycled polyester, recycled cotton or other repurposed materials, this indicates that the product helps reduce waste and conserve natural resources.

Recycling programmes: Some brands encourage the recycling of old garments. Look for information on return programmes or recycling instructions to keep clothing out of landfills.

Washing and Care Instructions

Care instructions help maintain the longevity of your garment and reduce environmental impact:

Washing temperature: Labels typically recommend the optimal washing temperature. Washing at lower temperatures saves energy and protects your garments.

Ironing: Some items are sensitive to heat, so the label may indicate whether low or high temperature ironing is required.

Drying: Many labels specify whether tumble drying is allowed. Avoiding the dryer reduces energy consumption and prevents fabric damage.

Hand wash or dry clean: Special fabrics such as silk, wool or certain synthetics may require special care to avoid damage.

Examples of care instructions:

Wash at 30°C: Wash at a low temperature to save energy and protect the fabric.

Iron at low temperature: The garment is sensitive to high heat.

Do not tumble dry: Protects the fabric from shrinking or damage in a hot dryer.

Care Symbols

Care symbols are universal shorthand that can be understood regardless of language. Here is how to read them:

1. Washing

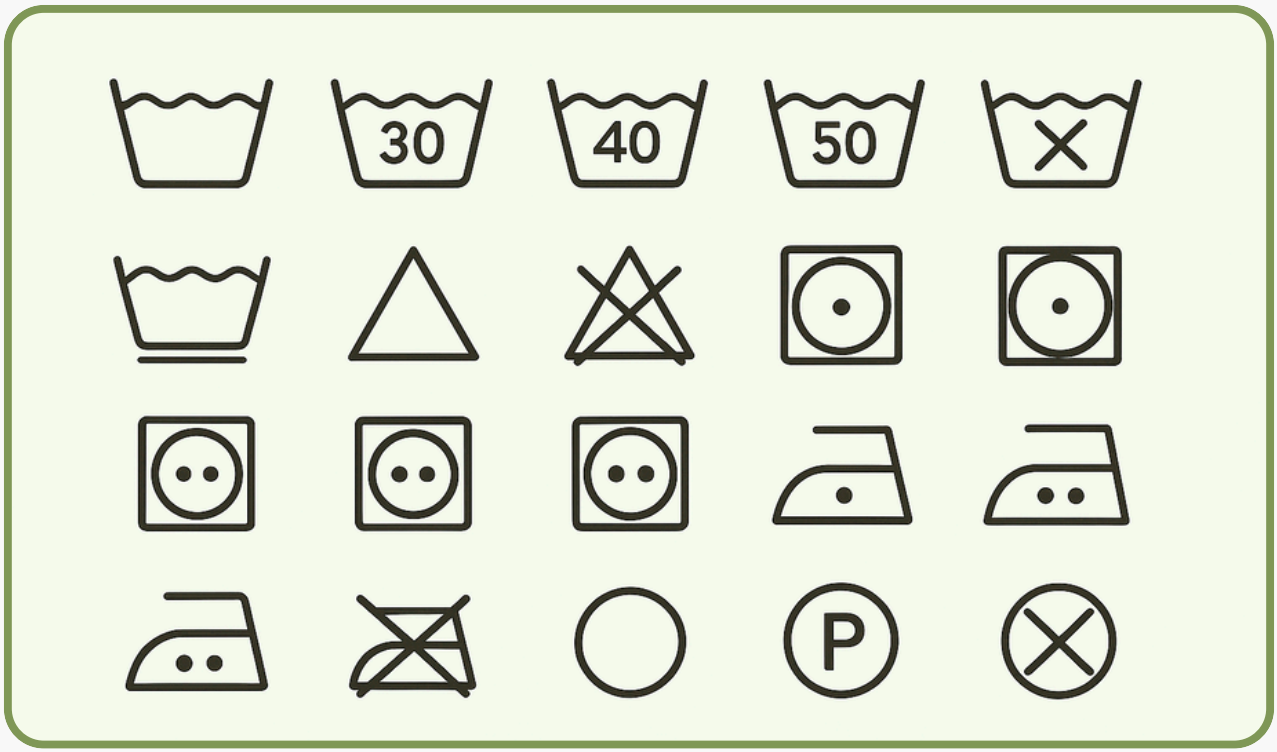
- Tub symbol: Indicates washing.
- Numbers inside the tub: Show the maximum washing temperature in °C.
- Lines under the tub:
  - One line: Gentle wash cycle.
  - Two lines: Very gentle wash cycle.
- Hand in tub: Hand wash.
- Crossed-out tub: Do not wash.

2. Bleaching
- Triangle without markings: Bleaching allowed.
- Triangle with a line underneath: Oxygen-based bleach allowed.
- Crossed-out triangle: Do not bleach.

3. Drying
- Plain square: Air drying.
- Square with a circle: Tumble drying.
- Circle with “P”: Professional dry cleaning with perchloroethylene.
- Crossed-out square: Do not dry.

4. Ironing
- Iron symbol with no dots: Do not iron.
- One dot: Iron at low temperature (up to 110°C).
- Two dots: Iron at medium temperature (up to 150°C).
- Three dots: Iron at high temperature (up to 200°C).
- Iron with lines underneath: Iron without steam.[49]

Reading labels is not just about knowing how to take care of your clothes, it is also about making informed decisions aligned with your values, whether they relate to sustainability, health or ethical labour practices.
By paying attention to material composition, production conditions, certifications and care instructions, you can choose garments that not only last longer but also reduce your impact on the environment and society.



[49] https://www.candy-home.com/sl_SI/blog/kaj-pomenijo-simboli-na-etiketah-oblacil/

EXPLANATION OF NEW CONCEPTS:

Sustainable clothing care involves taking care of garments in a way that extends their lifespan, reduces the need for frequent replacements, and minimises environmental impact.
Proper washing, storage, repair, and restoration can help reduce resource consumption and environmental pollution.
By incorporating these practices into your daily routine, you can significantly reduce your overall ecological footprint.

Slow Fashion	Promotes a more thoughtful and sustainable approach to clothing consumption, focusing on quality, local production and reducing impulsive purchasing.
Textile Longevity	Refers to extending the lifespan of garments through proper care, repair, reuse and recycling.
Ethical Consumerism	Involves making purchasing decisions that consider environmental and ethical standards, such as fair trade and sustainable production.
Take-Back Programmes	Initiatives in which consumers return old garments to stores or manufacturers for recycling, repurposing or responsible disposal.
Transparency in Fashion Supply Chains	Means that companies openly share information about their supply chains, including working conditions, material sourcing and environmental impacts.

MY CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE

4.4. MODULE 4

4.4. MODULE 4 – MY CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE

Sustainable clothing care involves looking after garments in a way that extends their lifespan, reduces the need for frequent replacements, and minimises environmental impact.
Proper washing, storage, repair, and restoration can help reduce resource consumption and lower environmental pollution.
By integrating these practices into your daily routine, you can significantly reduce your overall ecological footprint.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Upon completing the module, participants will: • understand the importance of personal responsibility and the power of individuals in promoting social and environmental change; • become familiar with the 8 pillars of sustainable fashion and 100 practical actions they can integrate into everyday life; • select and carry out at least 10 concrete sustainable actions within their own “square metre” and monitor their progress; • share knowledge and inspiration with at least three other people, thereby raising awareness of sustainable fashion within their communities.
TEACHING METHODS	lecture, discussion, project-based work
LEARNING FORMS	individual work: each participant works independently virtual work: collaboration through online platforms or digital tool
TEACHING MATERIALS AND TOOLS	computer and internet connection, printer
REFERENCES USED	Booklet: The Theory of the Square Metre
DURATION	3 teaching hours

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS
Activities
The implementation of the fourth module is flexible and may be carried out **online** or as **independent work,** depending on the agreement and organisational possibilities. The core activity of the module is the **presentation of the booklet** The Theory of the Square Metre, which contains 100 practical actions that individuals can take to contribute to more sustainable behaviour in everyday life. The key message of the booklet is that **social and environmental responsibility begin with personal decisions.** Through small steps—such as mending clothes, reusing items, choosing responsible materials and supporting ethical producers—each individual can significantly reduce pollution and the amount of textile waste. The booklet presents the **8 pillars** of sustainable fashion: 1. Buy less, but more mindfully. 2. Avoid fast fashion. 3. Choose environmentally friendly materials. 4. Support responsible producers. 5. Repair and extend the lifespan of clothing. 6. Reduce the volume of textile waste. 7. Care for clothing in an environmentally friendly way. 8. Purchase second-hand clothing. The booklet is available at link. After the booklet presentation, participants receive an **independent assignment:** 1. They select **10 sustainable actions** from the list of 100 proposals and record their implementation and progress until the final session. 2. They present the booklet to **at least three people** who are not part of the training and share the idea of personal responsibility for sustainable change. In the case of **online** delivery, you may additionally address topics raised by participants or further expand on content already covered. A sustainability **expert specialising in textile practices** can also be invited to the module to offer deeper insight into specific aspects of sustainable behaviour.

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

4.5. MODULE 5

4.5. MODUL 5 - CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

Sustainable clothing care involves looking after garments in a way that extends their lifespan, reduces the need for frequent replacements, and minimises environmental impact.
Proper washing, storage, repair, and restoration can help reduce resource consumption and lower environmental pollution.
By integrating these practices into your daily routine, you can significantly reduce your overall ecological footprint.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Udeleženci bodo po zaključku modula: • identify the key elements of a sustainable wardrobe and explain how personal fashion choices impact the environment and society; • know how to select high-quality and environmentally friendly clothing, distinguishing between natural, recycled and synthetic materials; • critically assess the sustainability of fashion brands and recognise examples of greenwashing; • apply practical strategies to extend the lifespan of garments, including proper washing, maintenance, repair and reuse; • develop a plan for organising their own wardrobe sustainably, based on quality, versatility, minimalism and responsible consumption.
TEACHING METHODS	lecture, discussion, group dialogue, video analysis, demonstration, workshop
LEARNING FORMS	frontal instruction: the instructor guides the work of the entire group group work: participants are divided into smaller groups pair work: participants work in pairs individual work: each participant works independently
TEACHING MATERIALS AND TOOLS	video clips, tables, online resources, The Theory of the Square Metre booklet, video titled Change Is Possible: Together We Are Shaping the Future of Fashion, knowledge-check quiz, evaluation questionnaire, certificate of participation computer, projector, speaker, projection screen, printer, whiteboard

REFERENCES USED	• Cline, E. L. (2019). The Conscious Closet: The Revolutionary Guide to Looking Good While Doing.Plume A guide to building a sustainable wardrobe while developing personal style, with an emphasis on conscious consumption and ethical fashion practices. • de Castro, O. (2021). Loved Clothes Last: How the Joy of Rewearing and Repairing Your Clothes Can Be a Revolutionary Act. Penguin Provides insights into extending the lifespan of garments and reducing waste through care, repair and mindful purchasing. • Minney, S. (2017). Slow Fashion: Aesthetics Meets Ethics. New Internationalist Publications Ltd. Explores the relationship between aesthetics, sustainability and ethics in the fashion industry. • Thomas, D. (2019). Fashionopolis: The price of fast fashion and the future of clothes. Penguin Press. Examines the environmental and social impacts of fast fashion and how to embrace a more sustainable fashion future. • Gonen, R. (2021). The waste-free world: How the circular economy will take less, make more, and save the planet. Portfolio/Penguin. Focuses on how businesses and individuals can reduce waste—including in the fashion industry—and adopt circular economy practices. • Spivack, E. (2014). Worn Stories. Princeton Architectural Press. A collection of personal stories exploring the emotional and historical significance of garments, reinforcing their long-term value. • Woodward, S. (2015). Ekologija mode. Springer. A critical exploration of the relationship between fashion consumption and the environment, offering practical insights for more sustainable choices. • Snaije, O. (2021). Dobra omara: Kako zgraditi premišljeno, trajnostno garderobo.Založba Greenleaf. Provides strategies for building a more sustainable and mindful wardrobe, emphasising quality and durability.
DURATION	3 teaching hours

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS
Activities
1. Introduction (30 min) Begin the session with a discussion about the independent tasks participants completed based on the booklet The Theory of the Square Metre. Participants share their experiences, challenges and observations, and together you evaluate their progress. **2. Viewing of the Video CHANGE IS POSSIBLE: Together We Are Shaping the Future of Fashion (30 min)** Watch the video together available at link The video illustrates how individual choices can influence the future of the fashion industry. After viewing, each participant prepares one example of good practice from their own environment (local shops, repair services, clothing swap initiatives, individuals or community projects), which are then discussed in the group **3. Adapting the Wardrobe for More Sustainable Textile Use and the Concept of Slow Fashion (60 min)** Present the key principles of sustainable textile use and the concept of slow fashion, drawing on the theoretical content of the module. Participants then develop a personal plan for sustainably organising their wardrobe, based on: · quality and longevity of garments, · versatility and thoughtful combination of clothing items, · minimalism and reducing unnecessary purchases, · responsible consumption and choosing sustainable and ethical brands. **4. Knowledge Check, Programme Evaluation and Awarding of Certificates (25 min)** At the conclusion of the training, assess participants' knowledge. Chapter 6.2 contains ready-made quiz questions, that can be conducted in various ways: • using the online tool Mentimeter, • distributing printed questions and reviewing answers together, • eading the questions aloud while participants answer individually. After the knowledge check, participants complete an evaluation questionnaire, on the implementation and quality of the programme **available in chapter 6.3.** Finish the session by **awarding certificates** of participation. A sample certificate form is available in **chapter 6.4** (also at link).

ADAPTING THE WARDROBE FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE TEXTILE MANAGEMENT

Adapting your wardrobe for a more sustainable lifestyle involves thoughtful decisions that reduce the environmental impact of fashion while still honouring personal style. Sustainable fashion does not require sacrificing style for ethics; instead, it encourages a conscious approach to purchasing, wearing and caring for clothing. By prioritising quality, versatility and longevity, you can create a wardrobe that is both stylish and planet friendly.

How to Build a Sustainable Wardrobe?

Every small action we take can contribute to a greater positive impact on both the environment and society. Here are several ways you can personally support responsible textile management:

1. Quality over Quantity

When building a sustainable wardrobe, quality is more important than quantity. Instead of purchasing many inexpensive garments that quickly lose shape, colour or function, invest in well-chosen pieces that will last for several seasons.

A garment is only as durable as its construction. Pay attention to:

- strong seams and well-secured stitching in stress areas,
- high-quality zippers, buttons and details that often wear out,
- the density and strength of the fabric, which prevents rapid wear or distortion.

Well-constructed garments are easier to repair, and repairs can significantly extend their lifespan.

2. Choose Environmentally Friendly Materials

Select natural, renewable and recycled fibres such as organic cotton, linen, hemp, merino wool, Tencel, organic silk or recycled polyester and nylon. These materials are durable, pleasant to wear and have a lower environmental impact. High-quality material is the foundation of a garment that will maintain its value over time, regardless of how often it is worn or washed.

When choosing clothing, you can contribute significantly to sustainable fashion by focusing on materials that are environmentally friendly and have a lower impact on natural resources.

Natural fibres: cotton, linen, silk, hemp and wool are biodegradable, meaning they break down more easily at the end of a garment's life. They are typically breathable, comfortable and pleasant to wear. Whenever possible, choose organic cotton to reduce pesticide and water use. Wool and hemp are excellent options for long-lasting pieces, while silk is ideal for light, luxurious garments.

Recycled materials: recycled polyester, nylon and other reclaimed materials reduce the demand for virgin resources and decrease waste. They extend the life cycle of existing plastic waste by transforming it into clothing.

Synthetic materials and microplastics: synthetic fabrics such as polyester, nylon and acrylic release microplastics during washing, polluting water ecosystems and accumulating in the food chain. While synthetics are often affordable and accessible, their long-term environmental impact should not be overlooked.

3. Versatility and Multifunctionality

A quality wardrobe is not just about materials and craftsmanship – it's also about choosing pieces that you can mix and match in different ways for various occasions. Classic, timeless items allow for layering, mixing, and adapting to different styles, reducing the need for constantly buying new trendy clothes.

For a sustainable and thoughtful wardrobe, it’s essential to start by building a solid foundation. Begin by creating a wardrobe with versatile, timeless pieces such as high-quality jeans, a classic white t-shirt, a white shirt, a neutral sweater, a classic jacket, the little black dress, elegant black trousers, a quality coat, a medium-sized bag, quality shoes, and so on.

When selecting clothes, stick to a neutral color palette, such as black, white, gray, navy blue, and beige. These colors are easy to mix and match, allowing you to create a variety of looks with fewer pieces, thus reducing the need for excessive shopping.

Focus on timeless cuts and designs that remain relevant across multiple seasons. This way, you’ll avoid constantly chasing fast-fashion trends and build a wardrobe that is durable, functional, and resistant to the ever-changing fashion cycles.

4. Avoid Fast Fashion

Fast fashion encourages mass production of inexpensive clothing, often made from synthetic materials that do not meet environmental standards. These items are usually low-quality, short-lived and intended for temporary use.

The consequences include overuse of natural resources, increased waste and negative impacts on workers in supply chains.

Reduce unnecessary purchases: one of the most effective strategies against fast fashion is to shop less but more thoughtfully. Before buying, ask yourself whether you truly need the item, whether you will wear it often and whether it is of good quality. This reduces demand for fast fashion and helps limit excessive production.

5. Choose Sustainable and Ethical Brands

When building a sustainable wardrobe, prioritise brands that place sustainability and ethics at the forefront. Such companies use environmentally friendly materials like organic cotton, hemp or recycled polyester and strive for transparency in their production processes. They ensure ethical working conditions and follow social and environmental standards, contributing to a fairer and more sustainable fashion industry.

Check Certifications: certifications such as GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard), Fair Trade, OEKO-TEX®, B Corp or Cradle to Cradle are reliable indicators that products are produced sustainably and ethically. These certifications help identify brands that care about both the environment and the people who make the clothing.[50]

Support Responsible Companies: your purchasing choices can encourage positive change within the industry. By supporting sustainable and ethical brands, you contribute to reducing the negative impacts of garment production and strengthening companies that prioritise environmental and social responsibility.

It is especially valuable to support small and local brands, which often have greater control over production processes and place a stronger emphasis on sustainable and ethical practices compared to large fast-fashion corporations.

Long Term Impact: with responsible purchasing decisions, you not only extend the lifespan of garments and reduce waste—you also help push the fashion industry towards more sustainable and ethical standards. Through mindful consumption, each individual can contribute to a fairer, more sustainable and environmentally responsible fashion future.

6. Reduce Clothing Waste

Clothing represents a significant portion of household waste, so it is important to consider sustainable ways of using and disposing of it.

Repair Damaged Clothing: instead of throwing garments away, try repairing minor damage. Replacing buttons, fixing zippers or sewing small holes can significantly extend the lifespan of your clothing and prevent unnecessary waste.

Clothing Recycling: when clothing can no longer be repaired or worn, recycling is an excellent solution. Many shops and brands now offer take-back programmes where you can drop off old clothes. These garments are then turned into new materials or other useful items, reducing the need for new raw resources and lowering environmental impact.

[50] https://global-standard.org/

Reuse: before discarding clothing, consider how it can be reused. Old T-shirts or towels can become cleaning cloths, jeans can be transformed into bags, and fabric scraps can be used for creative projects. This not only reduces waste but also extends the usefulness of garments and creates practical or unique items.

Donating: if clothing is still in good condition, donate it to charities or pass it on to friends who will continue to wear it. This gives garments a new life and supports the community while reducing textile waste.
With simple changes such as recycling, reuse or donating, we can all help reduce environmental impact and support a more sustainable future.

7. Choose Sustainable Knitwear
Knitwear is a versatile and functional part of a sustainable wardrobe. When selecting and using knitwear, follow these simple but effective guidelines:

Invest in Quality: choose knitwear made from natural materials such as organic cotton, and avoid synthetic fibres like acrylic that are less environmentally friendly. High-quality materials ensure longer-lasting garments.

Neutral Colours and Minimalist Design: knitwear in neutral tones and simple designs is easier to combine with other pieces. These styles are timeless, meaning you can wear them longer and for various occasions.

Versatility: choose knitwear that can be layered or worn for different occasions —from everyday errands to more formal events. This increases their usefulness and reduces the need for additional wardrobe items.

Proper Care: wash knitwear gently and store it properly to maintain its shape and softness. Proper care extends the garment's lifespan and ensures it remains a part of your wardrobe for years.

8. Responsible Choice of Footwear and Accessories
Sustainable Footwear: invest in shoes made from natural or eco-friendly materials such as vegetable-tanned leather, recycled fabrics or biodegradable alternatives. Choose high-quality footwear that can be repaired rather than discarded after short-term use.

Timeless Accessories: instead of following short-lived trends, opt for classic accessories that remain stylish for years. These pieces not only last longer but are easier to mix and match with various clothing styles.

9. Buying Second-Hand Clothing

Buying second-hand clothing is a sustainable choice that helps reduce the demand for new garment production and thus lowers environmental burden. By visiting second-hand shops, vintage stores or online resale platforms, you can give clothing a second life while reducing the consumption of natural resources, energy use and textile waste generation.

In addition to buying second-hand, **clothing swaps with friends**, family or colleagues are an excellent option. Clothing swaps are simple, fun and social ways to refresh your wardrobe without buying new items. This not only saves money but also supports a more circular and sustainable mode of consumption.

BENEFITS OF BUYING SECOND-HAND CLOTHING

- **Reduced environmental impact** – lowers water, energy and resource consumption needed to produce new garments.
- **Reduced textile waste** – gives clothing a second life and slows down its path to landfills.
- **Cost savings** – high-quality pieces can be purchased at much lower prices.
- **Unique style** – second-hand shops often offer unique or vintage items not found in conventional stores..

BENEFITS OF SLOW FASHION

Slow fashion is an alternative approach to the mass production of inexpensive, disposable clothing. It focuses on high-quality materials, ethical labour practices and designs that last for many years. Instead of chasing trends, slow fashion promotes timeless, versatile pieces that align with individual style and sustainability.

Environmental Benefits of Slow Fashion:

Reduced waste: slow fashion emphasises durability and longevity, which reduces the amount of clothing that ends up in landfills.
Lower carbon footprint: by focusing on local production and high-quality materials, slow fashion decreases carbon emissions associated with manufacturing and transport.
Resource preservation: the use of natural, renewable and recycled materials conserves resources and reduces dependence on environmentally harmful synthetic fibres.

Emerging Trends in Minimalism, Sustainable Wardrobes and Ethical Fashion

Minimalism in fashion encourages owning fewer but higher-quality pieces that match well and never go out of style. This trend aligns with the principles of sustainable wardrobes, where the focus is on longevity, quality and versatility rather than constantly buying new items.
Sustainable wardrobes: fashion brands are increasingly prioritising transparency, sustainability and ethical production methods, encouraging consumers to adopt conscious consumption habits. This includes using organic materials, reducing waste and ensuring fair wages and safe working conditions.
Ethical fashion: ethhical fashion encompasses both environmental sustainability and social responsibility. It promotes fair trade, ethical sourcing and supply chains that respect workers rights while prioritising environmentally friendly practices.[51]

Social Impact of Changing Fashion Habits

Changing fashion habits can have a profound social impact. Moving away from fast fashion helps reduce labour exploitation, promotes fair wages and supports workers rights.
Additionally, the focus on sustainability preserves resources for future generations and encourages more responsible consumer behaviour.

Why Support Local Brands or Second-Hand Shops?

Supporting local brands promotes ethical practices and reduces the environmental footprint of fashion. Local companies often prioritise quality, sustainability and fair working conditions over mass production, which is more common in large fast-fashion chains.
Second-hand shops contribute to the circular economy by enabling the reuse of clothing, reducing waste and lowering demand for new production. Buying second-hand not only reduces environmental impact but also offers unique, one-of-a-kind garments.

[51] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20201208STO93327/fast-fashion-eu-laws-for-sustainable-textile-consumption

EXPLANATION OF NEW CONCEPTS:

Minimalism in Fashion: minimalism focuses on owning fewer, higher-quality pieces that are versatile and long-lasting. It shifts attention away from trends toward timeless, well-constructed garments, reducing overproduction and waste.
Sustainable Wardrobe: a sustainable wardrobe minimises environmental impact by selecting durable, eco-friendly materials and making thoughtful purchasing decisions. It supports longevity and reduces dependence on fast fashion.
Garment Care: proper garment care extends the lifespan of clothing and reduces waste. This includes washing at lower temperatures and air-drying, which decreases the need for frequent replacements.
Clothing Upcycling: upcycling transforms old garments into new, functional items instead of discarding them. This process reduces textile waste and supports a circular fashion model.

5. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Good Practice Example in Slovenia: PremiumFERME

PremiumFERME is an exemplary Slovenian fashion brand that successfully integrates sustainability into all aspects of its business. With a strong focus on ethics, environmental responsibility and quality, PremiumFERME strives to produce clothing that is not only aesthetically appealing but also ethical, durable and timeless.
Below are the key sustainable practices PremiumFERME implements to create positive environmental and social impact.

Use of Natural and Recycled Materials

PremiumFERME places strong emphasis on using sustainable materials such as organic cotton. This cotton is grown without harmful chemicals like pesticides and synthetic fertilisers, significantly reducing environmental impact and lowering potential health risks for growers. The brand also uses recycled materials in its collections, helping reduce waste and preserve natural resources.
In addition, PremiumFERME ensures that its packaging is completely sustainable. The brand uses 100% recycled packaging materials, all fully recyclable, while avoiding plastic and unnecessary fillers.

This commitment to sustainable packaging reduces waste and ensures every garment is presented in an environmentally friendly way.
Their limited-edition pieces are made from 100% organic cotton, ensuring the garments are not only comfortable but also biodegradable and environmentally safe.

Low-Carbon Production

PremiumFERME is committed to reducing its carbon footprint at every stage of production. By collaborating closely with local suppliers and manufacturers, the brand reduces transport-related emissions and supports the local economy.
The brand also employs low-emission production methods and optimises processes to reduce energy and water consumption, helping mitigate environmental impact and contributing to the fight against climate change.

Local Production

A key advantage of the PremiumFERME business model is its focus on local production. Manufacturing in Slovenia allows the company to closely monitor the entire production process and ensure consistent adherence to ethical and quality standards. Local production also enables quicker response to any production issues and fosters a stronger connection between designer and manufacturer, ensuring better quality control.
Reducing the distance garments travel during production and delivery further lowers the brand's carbon footprint. This localised approach helps minimise the environmental impact associated with transport and packaging, supporting a more sustainable and responsible fashion industry.

Fair and Ethical Working Conditions

The fashion industry is often criticised for its poor working conditions and labour exploitation, but PremiumFERME is committed to breaking this cycle. By closely monitoring local production, the brand ensures workers are treated fairly and receive appropriate wages.
This commitment to ethical labour practices supports a more humane fashion industry where workers are respected, supported and fairly compensated for their work.

Giving Back to the Community

PremiumFERME understands that sustainability extends beyond environmental responsibility and includes contributing to the well-being of the local community.

By investing in local production, the brand creates jobs, supports local businesses and contributes to national tax revenue. This investment improves the standard of living, helps fight poverty and strengthens long-term economic stability. PremiumFERME demonstrates that sustainable fashion can generate positive social change.

Focus on Timeless Design and Quality

PremiumFERME places great emphasis on creating timeless pieces that can be worn year after year, rather than chasing the fast-changing trends of fast fashion. By designing high-quality, durable garments, the brand encourages consumers to invest in long-lasting pieces that will not quickly go out of style or be discarded. This commitment to long-term design reduces the need for constant replacement, helping address the problems of over-consumption and textile waste in the fashion industry.

Reducing Waste and Supporting the Circular Economy

As part of its sustainability mission, PremiumFERME actively promotes waste reduction through a circular economy approach.
They offer clothing repair services that ensure garments can be fixed and worn for longer. Additionally, the brand uses a special knitting technique that ensures zero waste during the production process.
By extending the lifecycle of garments and reducing production waste, PremiumFERME contributes to a more sustainable and circular fashion model.

Consumer Awareness and Education

PremiumFERME recognises the importance of educating consumers about sustainable fashion. The brand actively raises awareness about responsible consumption and the environmental impact of the fashion industry. Through these efforts, PremiumFERME encourages consumers to make informed purchasing decisions, which ultimately promotes a more mindful and sustainable approach to fashion.

PremiumFERME is a powerful example of how fashion brands can integrate sustainability across every aspect of their operation. By focusing on ethical production, local sourcing, sustainable materials and consumer education, PremiumFERME sets a new standard for fashion that prioritises the environment, society and long-term quality. Through its commitment to sustainability, the brand not only reduces its environmental footprint but also drives positive change within the fashion industry and the communities it serves.
Learn more at: Ferme Premium | Celebrate Comfort – Premiumferme[52]

[52] https://premiumferme.com/sl/pages/sustainability

Good Practice Example in the United States: Patagonia

Patagonia is one of the world's leading sustainable and environmentally responsible fashion brands. Founded in 1973 by Yvon Chouinard, the company has earned global recognition for its commitment to environmental protection, sustainability and ethical business practices.
Patagonia not only provides high-quality outdoor clothing and gear but also actively works to address and improve environmental challenges.
Below are the key characteristics of Patagonia's sustainable practices:

Sustainable Materials and Innovation

Patagonia is a leader in using sustainable and innovative materials:
Recycled Materials: Patagonia is a pioneer in integrating recycled materials into its products, including recycled polyester, cotton, nylon and even neoprene.
This reduces the need for virgin resources and lowers the environmental footprint of production.
Organic Materials: many Patagonia garments are made from organic cotton, reducing the use of harmful pesticides and chemicals during cultivation.
DWR Technology: Patagonia replaces harmful chemicals with environmentally friendly alternatives for durable water-repellent (DWR) coatings, further reducing negative environmental impact.

Ethics and Responsibility

Patagonia strongly emphasises ethical business practices:
Fair Trade Certified™: as one of the first brands to offer Fair Trade Certified products, Patagonia ensures factory workers receive fair wages and work in safe conditions.
Responsible Business Practices: Patagonia closely monitors its supply chain to ensure that all products are produced in accordance with human rights and with minimal environmental impact. Its approach highlights corporate social responsibility and ethical decision-making.

Repairs and Product Longevity

Patagonia is deeply committed to extending product lifespan:
Worn Wear Programme: the brand encourages customers to repair and reuse their items through the Worn Wear programme, where customers can exchange, repair or resell used Patagonia products.
This reduces waste and promotes a culture of longevity.

Product Repair Services: Patagonia offers repair services for its products, ensuring items last longer and stay in use instead of being discarded. Many repairs are even provided for free, promoting a culture of sustainability and reuse.

Commitment to Environmental Protection

Patagonia is dedicated to supporting environmental causes:
Donations: Patagonia donates 1% of its total sales or 10% of its profits (whichever is greater) to environmental organisations. Over the years, the brand has donated millions to projects focused on climate change, conservation and reducing overconsumption.
Awareness Campaigns: the brand uses its platform to raise awareness about environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation and sustainable resource management, frequently running campaigns that educate the public on responsible consumption.

Transparency and Traceability

Patagonia is an industry leader in transparency:
Open Production Practices: the company provides clear, detailed information about where and how its products are made, including working conditions, materials used and the environmental footprint of each item.
This transparency helps consumers make informed choices aligned with their values.

Fight against fast fashion

Patagonia rejects the fast fashion model based on cheap, mass-produced garments:
Longevity Over Quantity: instead of mass-producing short-lived, trend-driven items, Patagonia designs products that are durable, functional and timeless. This reduces the need for constant purchasing and helps minimise waste and the environmental damage associated with fast fashion.
Supporting Sustainable Brands: by choosing brands like Patagonia, consumers are encouraged to prioritise quality, longevity and sustainability over passing trends.

Why Is Patagonia Popular Among Sustainable Consumers?

Patagonia is more than just a clothing brand—it is a movement dedicated to environmental protection, sustainability and ethical business.
Environmentally conscious customers appreciate Patagonia's unwavering commitment to these goals.
The brand's philosophy resonates with people seeking high-quality, durable products that serve both functional and ethical purposes.

Where Is Patagonia Especially Well Known?

Outdoor Equipment: Patagonia is especially popular among nature lovers and adventurers. Its high-quality hiking, climbing, skiing, cycling and surfing apparel is durable and environmentally friendly.
Urban Streetwear: in recent years, Patagonia has also gained popularity in urban fashion. Its minimalist, functional designs align well with the streetwear aesthetic and appeal to consumers seeking style and sustainability.

How Can We Support Patagonia's Philosophy?

Consumers can actively support Patagonia's sustainability mission by adopting responsible consumption habits:
Buy less, buy better: instead of purchasing large quantities of clothing, focus on fewer, high-quality products that support sustainable brands.
Repair garments: repairing damaged items instead of discarding them extends their lifespan, as encouraged through Patagonia's repair services and Worn Wear programme.
Recycle and swap: participate in programmes like Worn Wear, where used Patagonia items can be recycled, traded or donated, giving garments a second life before disposal
Patagonia is a beacon of sustainability in the fashion industry. Its commitment to environmentally friendly practices, ethical labour and durable products sets an important example for consumers and other companies. By choosing Patagonia, consumers not only gain high-quality clothing and gear but also contribute to a broader movement toward environmental stewardship and social responsibility.
Through its philosophy and actions, Patagonia has become synonymous with a more sustainable and ethical lifestyle, proving that companies can thrive while positively impacting the world.

For more information on their sustainability practices, visit web page: Patagonia Outdoor Clothing & Gear[52]

[53] https://www.patagonia.com/home/

1. TEACHING MATERIAL:

DISCUSSION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

6. SUPPORTING MATERIALS

1ST TEACHING AID: DISCUSSION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

The textile industry is remarkably extensive and has a significant impact on the global economy, society and the environment. It is one of the world's major polluters. In this activity, participants learn how the fashion industry affects the extraction of natural resources and the transformation of the Earth's landscape.

Workshop title	The Impact of the Textile Industry on Our World
Duration	20 minutes
Method	True/False quiz. Participants determine whether a statement is TRUE or FALSE. This method encourages discussion and interaction between participants. VARIATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP: · The activity can be conducted using the Kahoot online app • Participants answer individually • Participants can be divided into two or more groups to compete • If a whiteboard is available, divide it into two sections with a line: write TRUE on the left and FALSE on the right, and have participants attach cards to the appropriate side Together, check the correctness of the answers.
Workshop objectives	Introduce participants to the impact of the fashion industry on our planet (economic, social and environmental impact) Encourage discussion on alternatives and solutions Provide a space for participants to express their opinions and experiences.
Additional materials	Question cards For in-person implementation using a whiteboard: cards, adhesive tape, whiteboard markers

WORKSHOP OUTLINE:

1. Introduction (5 min)
Introduce the topic and create a relaxed atmosphere for discussion.
• Present the purpose of the workshop: to recognise the significant impact of the fashion industry.
• If needed, divide participants into groups, distribute cards and explain the quiz procedure.
• If using Kahoot (kahoot.com), help participants access the quiz via their mobile devices.

2. Activity and Answer Verification (10 min)
Participants answer the statements, and then you review the correct answers together:
• The value of the fashion industry is estimated at more than 25 billion USD: TRUE
• The global fashion industry employs fewer than 50 million people: FALSE
Correct answer: The global fashion industry employs more than 75 million people.
• The textile industry releases 1.7 million tonnes of CO_2 annually: TRUE
• The fashion industry is responsible for about 10% of global industrial wastewater pollution: FALSE
Correct answer: The fashion industry is responsible for around 20% of global industrial wastewater pollution.
• Textile consumption in Europe is, on average, the 4th largest cause of environmental and climate impact: TRUE
• Textile consumption causes the 8th highest land and water use in the value chain, the 8th highest material resource use and the 3rd largest source of greenhouse gas emissions: FALSE
Correct answer: Textile consumption causes the 3rd highest land and water use, the 5th highest consumption of material resources, and the 5th largest source of greenhouse gas emissions.

- 30% of materials used in the entire clothing value chain are recycled: FALSE
- Correct answer: Only 13% of materials used in the clothing value chain are recycled.
- Approximately 46% of total textile waste is exported to African countries, and 41% to Asia: TRUE

3. Skupinska diskusija in ugotovitve (5 min)

Participants reflect on the environmental and social impact of the fashion industry.

In the final part of the workshop, summarise the main findings and allow time for questions.

- Discussion questions:

Were you aware that the fashion industry has such a large impact?
Has this motivated you to make changes? Which ones?

Summary of key solutions (highlight the main ones):

• More thoughtful purchasing of clothing
• Use local or sustainable brands
• Repair clothing instead of throwing it away

THE VALUE OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY IS ESTIMATED AT MORE THAN 25 TRILLION USD.

THE GLOBAL FASHION INDUSTRY EMPLOYS FEWER THAN 50 MILLION PEOPLE.

THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY RELEASES 1.7 MILLION TONS OF CO_2 ANNUALLY.

THE FASHION INDUSTRY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR APPROXIMATELY 10% OF GLOBAL INDUSTRIAL WASTEWATER POLLUTION.

TEXTILE CONSUMPTION IN EUROPE CAUSES, ON AVERAGE, THE 4TH HIGHEST ENVIRONMENT AL POLLUTION.

TEXTILE CONSUMPTION RESULTS IN THE 8TH LARGEST USE OF LAND AND WATER AND IS THE 3RD LARGEST SOURCE OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.

ONLY 30% OF THE MATERIALS USED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CLOTHING VALUE CHAIN ARE RECYCLED.

APPROXIMATELY 46% OF THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TEXTILES WAS EXPORTED TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES, AND 41% TO ASIA.

2. TEACHING MATERIAL:

THE LIFE CYCLE OF JEANS

2ND TEACHING AID: THE LIFE CYCLE OF JEANS

The life cycle of jeans is a relevant example of how deeply the textile industry is intertwined with globalisation. Jeans are an excellent case study because they are a universally known and widely worn garment.
By analysing the production process—from raw material to finished product, participants learn about the economic, environmental and social impacts of jeans.

Workshop title	The Life Cycle of Jeans
Duration	35 minutes
Method	First part of the workshop: Participants examine the labels on their clothing and footwear and identify the country of origin (Made in _____). A world map is displayed on the board, and together with the instructor, participants mark the locations from which their clothing/footwear originates. If no whiteboard is available, a printed map can be attached to a wall or placed on a table so all participants can gather around and see the map and marked points. The facilitator may use post-it notes, beans, or small pieces of paper with the names of countries to mark points on the map —many variations are possible. Second part of the workshop: Participants learn about the life cycle of jeans. Divide participants into two or more groups and distribute cards describing different stages of the jeans' journey. Groups read each stage and arrange the cards in the correct chronological order. VARIATION: In the second part, one group may follow the life cycle of jeans, while another follows the life cycle of a cotton T-shirt.
Workshop objectives	Stimulate critical thinking about the impacts of globalisation and connect findings with broader economic and social contexts Enable participants to express their viewpoints and experiences.
Additional materials	World map Cards describing the production stages Post-it notes, beans, or other markers for the map

WORKSHOP OUTLINE:

1. First Part of the Workshop (10 min)
Introduce the topic and establish a relaxed atmosphere for discussion.

Explain the workshop structure. Give participants a few minutes to locate the labels on their clothing and footwear and write down the country of origin.

Together with participants, mark these countries on the world map.
Explain that the country of origin shown on the label does not necessarily indicate the actual origin of the product. Labels such as Made in India or Made in Austria often indicate only the final production stage, while earlier steps—such as cotton cultivation, yarn spinning, dyeing or cutting—may take place in multiple different countries.

This will become clearer in the second part of the workshop through the example of the life cycle of jeans.

2. Second Part of the Workshop (15 min)
This part focuses on understanding the “life cycle of jeans”.
Keep the world map from the first part, but remove the previous markers.

Divide participants into groups and hand out cards describing each stage of the jeans’ journey. Groups read the descriptions and arrange the cards in the correct order.
Solution sequence: 1. I, 2. B, 3. A, 4. J, 5. C, 6. K, 7.G, 8. D, 9. E, 10. F, 11. H

This sequence reflects the entire production process—from cotton cultivation to the final sale.
During the activity, explain the key stages and highlight how globalised the textile industry is today.

After checking the correct order, show the jeans’ journey on the world map.

It is surprising that a single garment may travel between 20,000 and 50,000 kilometres before reaching a local store.

3. Skupinska diskusija in ugotovitve (10 min)
Participants discuss their findings in groups.
They may use the text on the cards as discussion prompts or formulate their own questions based on the activity.
If necessary, the facilitator guides the discussion with additional questions, such as:

- In the past, most textile production was located in Europe. Why did production shift elsewhere?
- What factors enabled this relocation?
- What consequences does globalisation of the textile industry have for employment, the economy and the environment?
- How do production processes influence the final price of a garment?

The purpose of the discussion is to encourage critical thinking about the impacts of globalisation and connect participants' insights with broader economic and social contexts.

I

The primary raw material from which jeans are made is cotton. This plant thrives mainly in tropical and subtropical regions, where climate conditions are optimal for its growth. Cotton plants require constant temperatures between 18 and 28 degrees Celsius, plenty of sunlight, and large amounts of water.
The cotton used to make our jeans was grown and harvested in Asia, specifically in India, where climatic conditions and agricultural traditions have enabled its large-scale cultivation.

B

To transform raw cotton into a usable material, it must first be processed into yarn. In our case, spinning takes place in Turkish spinning mills.
Producing high-quality yarn requires modern and expensive machinery, which is why this part of the production process typically occurs in countries with the appropriate infrastructure, capital, and technical expertise. Such countries enable efficient industrial production and ensure high standards in the processing of raw materials.

A

Next is the weaving of denim fabric, which in our case takes place in weaving mills in China. There, the textile industry benefits from extensive production infrastructure, advanced technology, and affordable labor, which enables large-scale manufacturing of denim fabrics for the global market.

C

The dyeing process takes place in Tunisia, in North Africa. This region has a developed textile industry specialized in the treatment and finishing of fabrics. Dyeing requires large amounts of water, chemicals, and appropriate technology, which is why it is often carried out in countries where these resources are readily available and production costs remain relatively low.

G

The pattern for the jeans originates from the United States, where it is designed by experts in fashion design and the textile industry. Thanks to digital technology and global connectivity, patterns can be easily and quickly sent via email to production facilities around the world. This enables flexible adaptation to fashion trends and optimization of the production process without the need for physically transporting the designs.

J

To give denim fabric its distinctive blue color, an additional dyeing treatment is required in the next phase. In our case, the dye comes from Poland, which has a developed chemical industry specializing in the production of textile dyes. These dyes are essential for achieving the durable and intense color characteristic of jeans.

K

After the dyeing process is completed, the fabric undergoes a final finishing treatment to make it soft and wrinkle-free. In our case, this process takes place in Bulgaria, where specialized textile finishing facilities are located.

Once the fabric is ready, it is sent to manufacturing plants for cutting and sewing. There, in addition to the fabric, all other components must be assembled—such as the pattern, buttons, zippers, care labels, and other necessary accessories—which together will form the final product: the jeans.

D

The care labels, which are an important part of the final product, come from France. There they are designed and printed in accordance with international standards for textile labeling. They are then sent to Bangladesh, where they will be incorporated into the production process of the jeans along with the other components.

E

The buttons and rivets, which are essential accessories for jeans, are manufactured in Italy, a country well known for its high-quality metal components for the textile industry. After production, they are sent to Bangladesh, where they will be incorporated into the manufacturing process alongside the other components of the jeans.

F

In the next phase, the individual parts of the jeans are assembled and sewn together. This process is extremely labor-intensive and requires precision as well as significant physical effort. It is mostly carried out by young women working in textile factories.
Because the goal is to minimize production costs, sewing is often done in countries with the lowest labor expenses, where workers' wages are very low. In our case, this stage takes place in Bangladesh, which is one of the global centers for large-scale textile manufacturing.

H

Once the jeans are fully sewn, they are transported to Europe by cargo ships. There, the final processing phase takes place—in specialized facilities, patches are attached, the jeans are washed again, and they are prepared for distribution.
After the jeans are properly finished, they are moved to central warehouses, from which they are shipped to retail centers across European countries, where they await their buyers. This logistical process ensures that the product meets the expected standards and is ready for sale on the market.

3. TEACHING MATERIAL:

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A COTTON T-SHIRT

3RD TEACHING AID: THE LIFE CYCLE OF A COTTON T-SHIRT

The life cycle of a cotton T-shirt provides an additional example of how deeply the textile industry is interwoven with globalisation. In the previous teaching aid, we examined jeans. This activity can be used as an additional exercise or as an alternative to the Life Cycle of Jeans teaching aid.
A short-sleeved cotton T-shirt is another excellent example because it is a garment familiar to everyone and widely worn in everyday clothing culture.

Workshop title	The Life Cycle of a Cotton T-Shirt
Duration	35 minutes
Method	Group discussion-based method, in which participants follow the journey from cotton to T-shirt using text cards and photographs.. VARIATION: divide participants into groups—some follow the life cycle of jeans, others the life cycle of the cotton T-shirt. Each group then presents its findings to the others, followed by group discussion.
Workshop objectives	Encourage critical thinking about the impacts of globalisation and connect findings with broader economic and social contexts Enable participants to express their viewpoints and experiences
Additional materials	Cards describing each production stage Corresponding photographs to accompany the cards

WORKSHOP OUTLINE:

1. Introduction to the Workshop (5 min)
Present the structure of the workshop and divide participants into smaller groups if needed.

2.Implementing the Workshop (20 min)
Distribute the cards and photographs to the group(s). Encourage ongoing discussion throughout the activity.

Participants work together in groups.
If there are more than 12 participants, they may be divided into two smaller groups.

Distribute the text cards and photographs, the first participant reads the text on the first card, and the group finds the photograph that corresponds to that production stage. The next participant reads the second card, and the group finds the next matching photograph. The process continues in sequence until all cards and images are paired
In this way, the group gains a clear overview of the production process of a cotton T-shirt.

Encourage discussion already during the matching of cards and images.

3. Closing Discussion (10 min)
Participants reflect on their findings in groups.
Discussion prompts may be drawn from the text on the cards, or participants may create their own questions based on the activity.
If needed, the facilitator guides the conversation and adds questions such as:

- In the past, most textile production was located in Europe. Why did production shift elsewhere?
- What factors enabled this relocation?
- What consequences does the globalisation of the textile industry have for employment, the economy and the environment?
- How do production processes influence the final price of a garment?

The purpose of the discussion is to foster critical thinking about the impacts of globalisation and connect participants' insights with broader economic and social contexts.

O

The primary raw material for producing our T-shirt is cotton, which has been used in the textile industry for centuries. It thrives in tropical and subtropical climates, where warm and hot conditions without frost prevail. For optimal growth, it requires plenty of sunlight, constant temperatures between 18 and 28 degrees Celsius, and abundant water.

Traditional cotton cultivation often involves the intensive use of fertilizers and insecticides, which has negative environmental impacts. Chemical agents can seep into the soil and contaminate groundwater, posing risks not only to ecosystems but also to the health of agricultural workers who are regularly exposed to harmful substances.

R

The cotton plant develops fruit that resemble small bolls containing pea-sized seeds surrounded by dense white fibers. When the cotton matures, the bolls split open and the white fibers emerge. At this stage, it is crucial to harvest the cotton quickly, as it can otherwise become too tough and unsuitable for further processing.

In large monoculture plantations, harvesting is usually done mechanically. First, the plants are sprayed with chemical agents that cause the leaves to fall off, allowing for easier mechanical collection of the cotton fibers. Although this practice increases the efficiency of harvesting, it also brings negative environmental and health consequences due to the use of toxic chemicals.

M

Because our T-shirt will be form-fitting, a small amount of elastane is added to the cotton fabric. Elastane is a synthetic fiber derived from petroleum, similar to polyester. Its use in textiles is indispensable due to its unique properties—it provides fabric elasticity, quick drying, good shape retention, and easy maintenance. Thanks to these characteristics, elastane enhances the comfort and functionality of clothing, especially in tight-fitting garments where flexibility and stretchability of the material are essential.

S

After harvesting, the cotton fibers are separated from the seeds, cleaned, and compressed into bales, which are then sent to spinning mills. There, the cotton fibers, together with elastane, are spun into yarn. The first step in this process involves forming wide cotton slivers, which are then transformed through several spinning stages into a very fine cotton thread suitable for further processing.

Spinning is mostly carried out with the help of high-tech and expensive machinery, which ensures precision and consistency in yarn quality. Once the yarn is ready, it is transferred to the weaving mill, where it is woven into the final fabric that will serve as the base material for producing our T-shirt.

L

Before the T-shirt can be sewn, the fabric production process must be fully completed. This includes bleaching, dyeing, and treating the material with chemicals that give it the desired softness, shine, and resistance to dirt.

To achieve intense colors, dyes containing heavy metals are often used. These dyes are not only environmentally problematic but can also pose serious health risks, as some have been linked to carcinogenic effects.

Final fabric processing often takes place in countries where wastewater regulation is inadequate, meaning that hazardous chemicals frequently end up untreated in the environment, polluting water sources and threatening ecosystems. In addition, workers who come into contact with these chemicals are often exposed to dangerous substances without proper protection, further contributing to health risks in the textile industry.

P

Zdaj je naša majica končno prispela v trgovino, kjer čaka na svojega kupca. Za nami je dolga in kompleksna proizvodna pot, ki je vključevala številne faze – od pridelave bombaža do končne distribucije.

Kljub temu imajo potrošniki pogosto zelo malo informacij o dejanskih pogojih, v katerih je bila majica proizvedena. Na etiketah običajno piše le država končne izdelave, ne pa celotna zgodba o delovnih pogojih, vplivu proizvodnje na okolje in izvoru uporabljenih surovin. To pomanjkanje transparentnosti potrošnikom otežuje ozaveščene odločitve pri nakupu oblačil, kar še dodatno poudarja potrebo po trajnostni in etični proizvodnji v tekstilni industriji.

T

Once all the components are prepared, they are cut and assembled. The fabric pieces are cut according to the pattern templates and then machine-processed or hand-sewn together. This stage, known as final production, is one of the most labor-intensive in the entire process, as it requires great precision and manual work.

Due to high labor costs in developed countries, many companies move production to countries where workers' wages are low. Sewing most commonly takes place in Asian countries such as Bangladesh and China, where large-scale textile industries enable low production costs—often at the expense of working conditions and fair wages for the workers.

N

Our T-shirt is now completely finished. The next steps are packaging and transport to its final destination. In our case, it first begins its journey by cargo ship, which enables the mass transportation of textile products.

However, this is not the T-shirt's first journey. Its path began with the cotton, which had to travel through a long processing chain, from the field to the spinning mill, weaving mill, dyeing facility, and final production. Throughout the entire process, the T-shirt traveled more than 20,000 kilometers, with exceptionally high oil consumption, contributing significantly to environmentally harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

This long and complex production process highlights the environmental impact of the globalized textile industry and raises important questions about sustainable and ethical clothing production.


Port Of
Baltimore

4. TEACHING MATERIAL:

PROFIT DISTRIBUTION OF A T-SHIRT

4TH TEACHING AID: PROFIT DISTRIBUTION OF A T-SHIRT

When buying a T-shirt, most people focus on its appearance, personal need or quality. Very few stop to consider where the profit from each T-shirt actually goes.

Workshop title	Profit Distribution of a T-Shirt
Duration	20 minutes
Method	Individual work followed by group discussion
Workshop objectives	Introduce participants to how Western consumer habits influence global production, and illustrate how final consumers are often unaware of the background processes. Encourage reflection on possible actions that individuals can take.
Additional materials	Printed worksheet T-Shirt Cutout (A4 format) Pens and/or scissors

WORKSHOP OUTLINE:

1. Introduction (5 min)
Introduce the topic to the participants.

Since participants have already learned about the life cycle of a cotton T-shirt and/or jeans in previous teaching aids, they already possess background knowledge.

Emphasise that this activity focuses on a T-shirt produced in a low-wage country such as Bangladesh, Thailand etc.
Explain that the earnings from a single cotton T-shirt are divided into several categories:

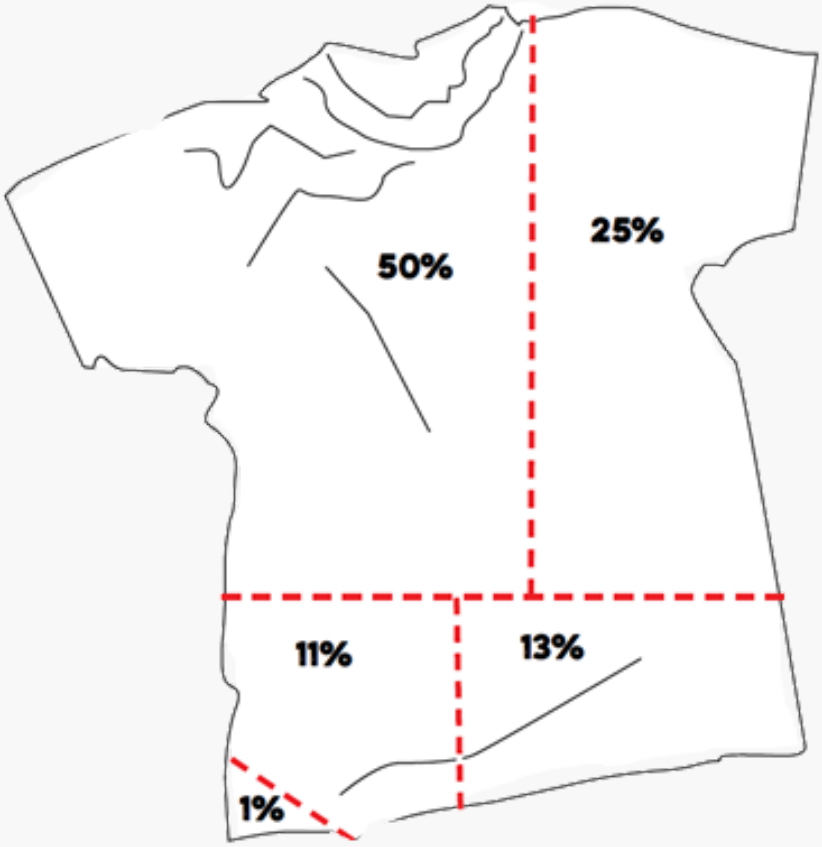
- retail
- brand, administration, marketing
- material costs and factory profit
- transport costs and taxes
- wages of seamstresses/tailors.

2.Activity and Answer Verification (10 min)
Ask participants to mark on their cutout how much profit they believe each category receives.
They divide the T-shirt into five sections. They may also physically cut it into parts using scissors.

CORRECT DISTRIBUTION (SOLUTION):

- Retail: 50%
- Brand, administration, marketing: 25%
- Material costs and factory profit: 13%
- Transport costs and taxes: 11%
- Wages of seamstresses/tailors: 1%

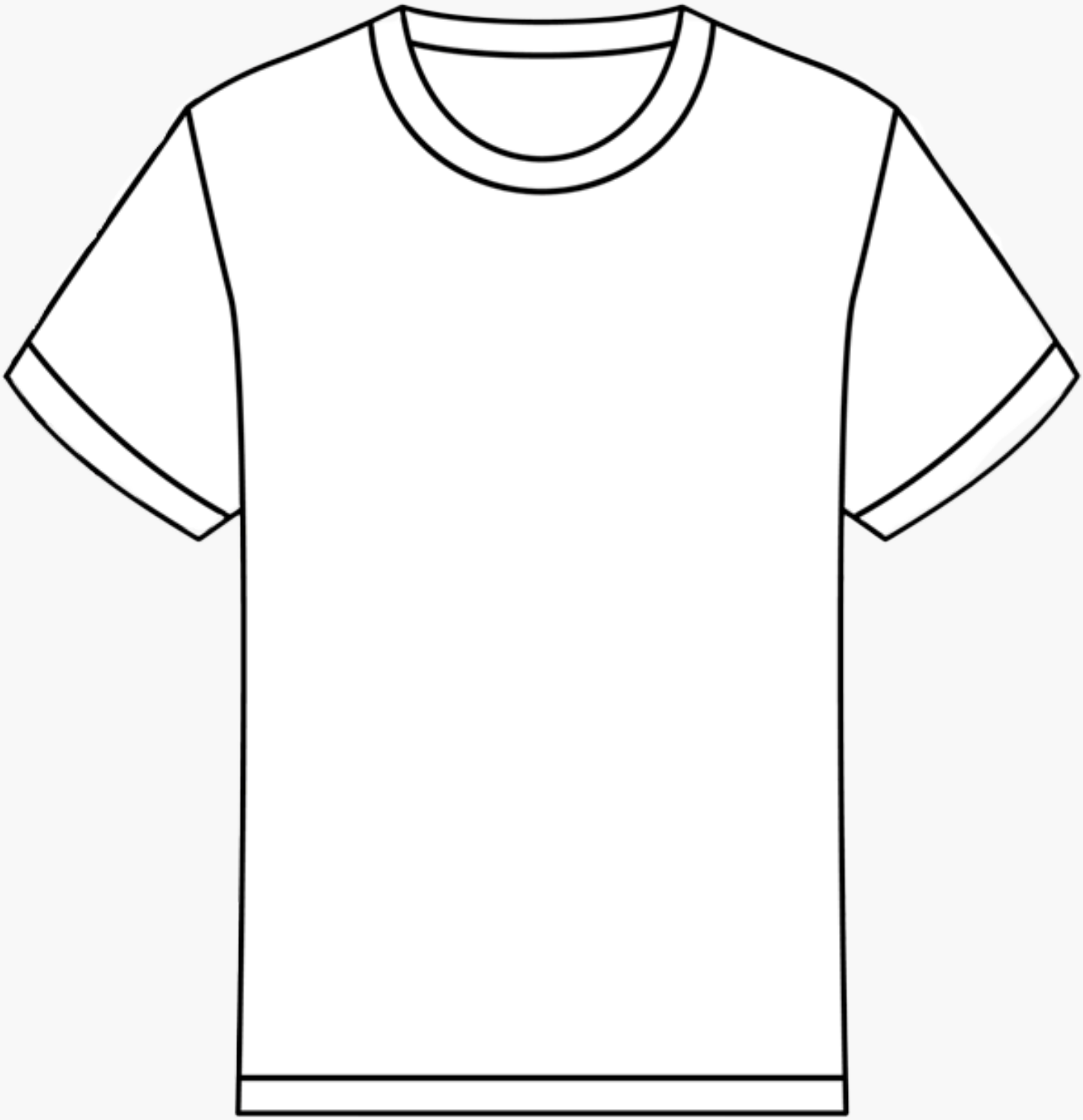
VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE SOLUTION



3. Group Discussion and Conclusions (5 min)

Most of our clothing is produced abroad, in countries of the so-called Global South. The main reason for this relocation is cheap labour. In Bangladesh, for example, factory workers—mostly women—earn less than €0.50 per hour. They work in conditions that are often described as modern slavery.

(Vir: https://focus.si/recimo-ne-hitri-modi-in-zelenemu-zavajanju, pridobljeno 11. 3. 2025).



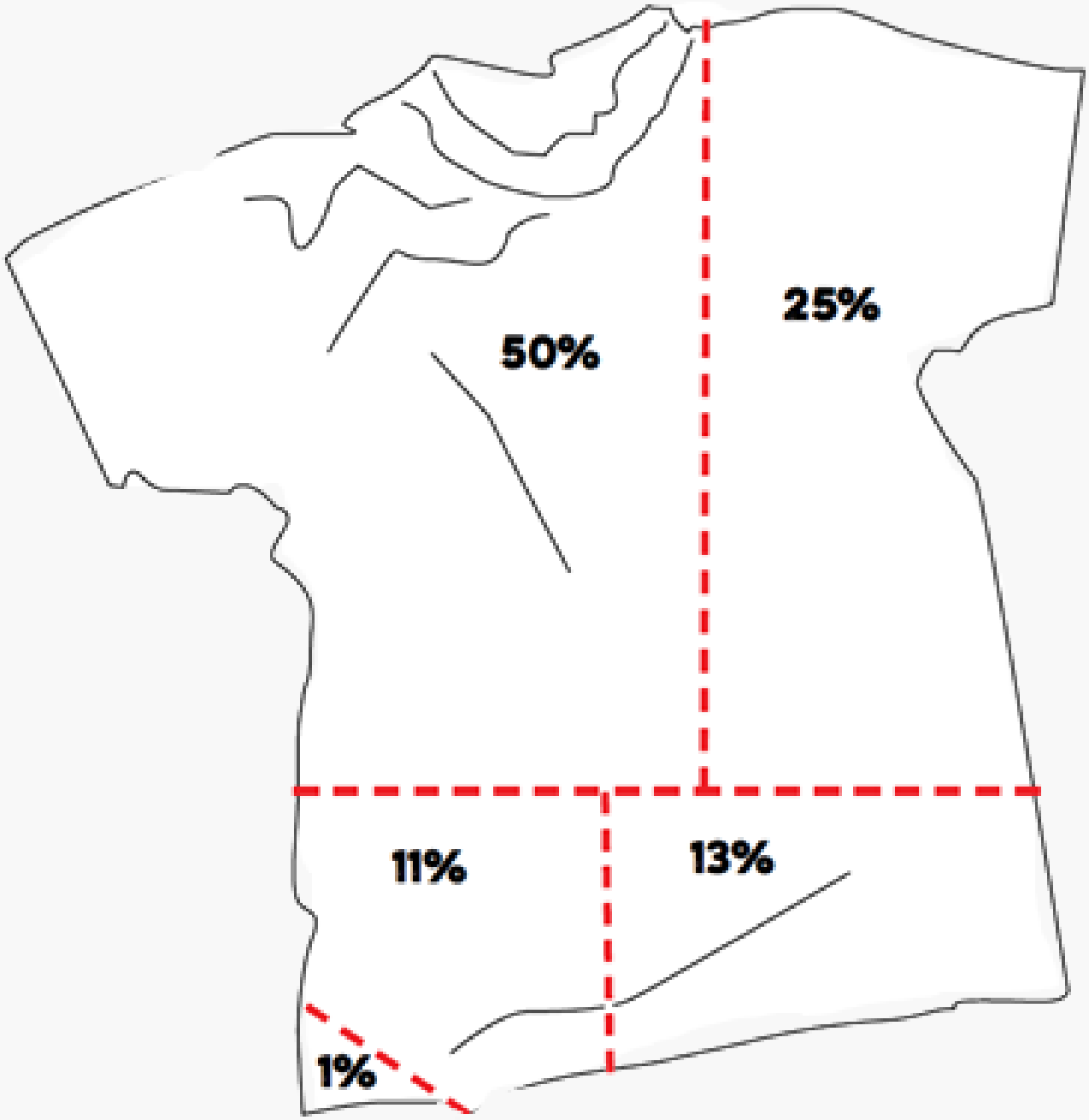
retail sales, administration/ management, VAT

transport

brand, administration, advertising

material costs and factory profit in third countries

wages of seamstresses and tailors



T-SHIRT PROFIT DISTRIBUTION:

- Retail: 50%
- Brand, administration, marketing: 25%
- Material costs and factory profit: 13%
- Transport costs and taxes: 11%
- Wages of seamstresses/tailors: 1%

5. TEACHING MATERIAL:

DISCUSSION ON CHEMICALS IN CLOTHING

5TH TEACHING AID: DISCUSSION ON CHEMICALS IN CLOTHING

Many chemicals are hidden in clothing. Through this workshop, participants will learn about the health risks associated with harmful chemicals commonly found in garments. The activity focuses on denim, a familiar and widely used material.

Workshop title	Let's Discover the Chemicals in Our Clothing
Duration	30 minutes
Method	Praktična in interaktivna delavnica s primeri iz vsakdanjega življenja.
Workshop objectives	Introduce participants to harmful chemicals found in denim and their health impacts. Encourage discussion on alternatives and solutions Provide space for participants to express their views and experiences.
Additional materials	Old garments, a plastic water bottle, scissors, sheets of paper, markers.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE:

1. Introduction (5 min)

Introduce the topic and create a relaxed atmosphere for discussion.

- Present the purpose of the workshop
- Ask an introductory question:
- Have you ever considered that clothing can affect your health?
- Wait for participants' responses and briefly comment on them.
- Explain that today's focus is denim—one of the most popular types of clothing, yet often treated with chemicals.
- Present the aim of the workshop:
  - We will discuss chemicals found in denim and their health impacts.
  - We will exchange ideas on how we can make healthier clothing choices.

2. Presentation of Harmful Chemicals in Denim (7 min)

Inform participants about the most common chemicals and their associated health risks.

Brief overview of chemicals (use examples from the supplementary text, but in simple terms):

1. Pesticides – used in cotton cultivation; may cause headaches, nausea and long-term hormonal disruption.
2. Formaldehyde – used to prevent wrinkling; irritates the respiratory system and may cause allergies.
3. Chlorine – used for bleaching; may cause respiratory and skin irritation.
4. Azo dyes – dyes that may contain carcinogenic substances and trigger allergies.
5. PFAS (water-repellent chemicals) – affect hormones and may contribute to cardiovascular disease.
6. Acid bleaching – used in denim finishing; can irritate skin and eyes.
7. Phthalates – found in certain plasticised components of clothing; may disrupt hormones and cause allergic reactions.

USEFUL LINK: https://www.askreach.eu/svhc/

- Discussion questions:

Were you aware that these chemicals are present in your clothing?
Have you ever experienced skin or respiratory problems due to clothing?

3. Group Discussion – How Can We Reduce Exposure? (13 min)

The main goal of this part is to encourage participants to think about alternatives and solutions.

- Divide participants into small groups (3–5 people) and ask them to answer:

- What can we do to reduce contact with harmful chemicals in clothing?
- *How can we identify healthier clothing options when shopping?*
- *Do you think these topics should be discussed more openly in the public?*

- Collecting opinions: Each group presents its key findings.
- Summarise the main solutions (highlight these):

- Choosing organic cotton and clothing free from harmful chemicals.
- Washing new clothes before wearing them.
- Avoiding heavily processed fabrics (shiny denim, highly water-repellent garments, etc.).
- Supporting local or sustainable brands.

4. Conclusion and Questions (5min)

Summarise key insights and allow time for questions.

- Summary: What did we learn today?
- Ask participants: From now on, what will you do differently when choosing clothing?
- Invite participants to share their experiences or questions.
- Emphasise that as consumers they have the power to choose—and that those choices can directly influence their health.

6. TEACHING MATERIAL:

HOW MUCH ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE CAN A SINGLE GARMENT CAUSE?

6TH TEACHING AID: HOW MUCH ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE CAN A SINGLE GARMENT CAUSE?

The composition and origin of a garment can be a mystery to many consumers. Increasingly, attention is being drawn to the fact that both origin and composition are crucial for our health and for the planet.
We are becoming more aware of the dangers of microplastics—and textiles are one of the greatest contributors due to the release of microplastic fibres.

Workshop title	How Much Environmental Damage Can a Single Garment Cause?
Duration	30 minutes
Method	Practical and interactive workshop using everyday examples
Workshop objectives	Encourage participants to think critically about the environmental. impact of the fashion industryDemonstrate the real environmental consequences of fashion through a practical example. Provide space for participants to express their opinions and experiences.
Additional materials	/

WORKSHOP OUTLINE:

1. Introduction (5 min)

Begin with a simple question:
“How many items in your wardrobe have you not worn for more than a year?”
Wait for responses and comment briefly.

Share key information:
a) The fashion industry is **one of the biggest** polluters in the world.
b) Each year **92 million tonnes** of textile waste are generated.
c) Producing a single cotton T-shirt requires **2,700 litres of water**—as much as **one person drinks in 2.5 years!**

Discussion question:
“Have you ever considered that your clothes are linked to water consumption and pollution?”

2. Practical Exercise: How Much Damage Can One Garment Cause? (10 min)
Each participant chooses an old garment they brought along, or you may provide some.

Visual demonstration:

a) Hold up a 1.5 L water bottle and explain:
"This T-shirt required almost 2,700 litres of water—that's 1,800 bottles like this one!"

b) Scissors and paper:
Ask everyone to **write on a sheet of paper**: "What happens to a garment when it is thrown away?"
Attach their answers to a board or read them aloud.

Microplastics in clothing:
c) If the garments are made of polyester, explain:
"Every time we wash synthetic clothing, microscopic fibres are released into rivers and oceans. Fish ingest them—and then we ingest the fish. Microplastics become part of our food chain."

PRACTICAL EXERCISE:

Practical exercise: "Invisible Damage" in Our Clothing (10 min)
Goal: To demonstrate through a simple experiment how microplastics from clothing end up in water.
Materials (affordable and easily available):

- Two containers with water
- A cotton T-shirt and a synthetic T-shirt (polyester, nylon)
- A paper coffee filter

Steps:

1. **Explain the experiment:**
   - Each wash cycle releases microplastics and fibres from synthetic clothing.
   - These particles end up in oceans and enter the food chain, eventually reaching our plates.

2. **Experiment:**
   - Dip the cotton T-shirt into one container and gently rub it—the water remains clear.
   - Dip the synthetic T-shirt into the other container, rub it, and then pour the water through the filter. Participants will see tiny particles and fibres collected in the filter.

3. **Discussion questions:**
   - *"What does this mean for the environment?"*
   - *"Have you heard of microplastics before?"*
   - *"How can we reduce this impact?"*

Key takeaway:

- **Synthetic garments release microfibres every time they are washed.**
- **These fibres cannot be filtered out of wastewater and therefore end up in oceans and our food chain.**

3. Conclusion and Questions (5 min)
Summarise the main insights and allow time for questions.

- Summary: What did we learn today?
- Ask participants: What will you do differently from now on when choosing clothing?
- Invite participants to share experiences and questions.
- Emphasise that consumers have the power to choose—and that these choices can directly improve their health and reduce environmental impact.

7. TEACHING MATERIAL:

GREENWASHING

7TH TEACHING AID: GREENWASHING

There are 8 cards available (appendix).

1. Card: "Eco Collection – New Sustainable Fashion!"
Questions to consider:

- Are any details provided about the materials used?
- Is there a certification (e.g., GOTS, OEKO-TEX) or a clear explanation of sustainable practices?
- Is this an entirely sustainable product line or only a few selected items?

Possible conclusion: This is often **greenwashing** if no concrete evidence of sustainability is provided.

2. Card: "Made from 100% Recycled Materials!"
Questions to consider:

- Which materials are being recycled?
- What percentage of the final product actually contains recycled material?
- Is credible certification provided (e.g., GRS – Global Recycled Standard)?

Possible conclusion: If the company does not disclose further details, this may be a **misleading claim.**

3. Card: "Planet-Friendly – Without Any Proof!"
Questions to consider:

- What does this actually mean? Less CO_2 emissions? Fewer chemicals? Reduced water use?
- Does the company provide concrete data or only green colours and leaf symbols?
- Are there independent certificates supporting the claim?

Possible conclusion: If no concrete evidence is provided, this is **greenwashing.**

4. Card: "Certified by OEKO-TEX® Standard 100"
Questions to consider:

- Do you know what the OEKO-TEX certificate means? (It ensures that materials do not contain harmful chemicals.)
- Does the company transparently reference this certification?
- Does it apply to the entire product or only specific parts (e.g., the dye, the fabric)?

Possible conclusion: Companies often use **greenwashing** by limiting sustainable claims to one small collection.

5. Card: “Limited Sustainable Collection – Better for the Planet!”
Questions to consider:

- Is the company committed to sustainability across its entire production, or only within one small collection?
- Are most of their products still unsustainable?
- Is this merely a marketing strategy or genuine effort toward sustainable fashion?

Possible conclusion: Companies often use **greenwashing** by limiting sustainable claims to one small collection.

6. Card: “100% Biodegradable Packaging!”
Questions to consider:

- Does this mean the product itself is sustainable, or only the packaging?
- Is the company emphasising packaging while the production process remains harmful?
- Are concrete details provided about biodegradability?

Possible conclusion: If the sustainability focus is solely on packaging and not the product, this is **greenwashing.**

7. Card: “Reduced Carbon Footprint!”
Questions to consider:

- How did the company reduce its carbon footprint?
- Are concrete numbers provided or only general statements?
- Are their CO_2 emissions actually lower, or is the reduction based only on offsetting (e.g., planting trees)?

Possible conclusion: Without specific figures and transparent data, this may be **greenwashing.**

8. Card: “We Use Ethically Sourced Cotton!”
Questions to consider:

- Who verifies that the cotton is truly sourced ethically?
- Does the company have certifications (e.g., Fair Trade, GOTS)?
- Is the entire supply chain ethical or only one part of it?

Possible conclusion: If there is no clear verification, the claim may be **greenwashing.**

QUIZ – KNOWLEDGE CHECK

The quiz is designed as a reflective learning tool to monitor participants' understanding and awareness after each training session.

It can be used at the end of each module as part of the learning process or during the final module to gather feedback on newly acquired knowledge.

How to Deliver the Quiz?

The quiz can be conducted using open-ended questions or multiple-choice questions, depending on the group dynamics.

You can deliver it orally, in writing or interactively using digital tools such as Mentimeter, Kahoot or Google Forms.

To use these tools, create a user account and display the quiz on a screen so participants can answer in real time.

After each question, encourage conversation and reflection — the goal is not only to check knowledge, but also to stimulate critical thinking and sustainable awareness.

Questions

Open-Ended Questions

Module 1: Introduction to Sustainable Fashion

How can our consumer choices help reduce the environmental impact of the textile industry?

Why are education and awareness fundamental pillars of sustainability?

Module 2: The Reality of the Fashion Industry

What are the main environmental impacts caused by fast-fashion production and consumption?

What is the connection between working conditions in the textile industry and the final price of clothing?

Module 3: Change Is Possible

How does choosing sustainable materials impact human health and the planet?

Why is it important to know how to read clothing labels before purchasing?

Module 4: Take Action

What everyday habits can you start adopting today to become part of the shift toward sustainable fashion?

How can repairing clothing contribute to the circular economy and reduce waste?

Module 5: Sustainable Changes in Everyday Life
How can we create a wardrobe that benefits the environment while making daily dressing easier?
What social impact does supporting local brands or buying second-hand clothing create?

Multiple-Choice Version and Interactive Quiz

Module 1: Introduction to Sustainable Fashion
Which personal action is, in your opinion, the most effective for reducing the environmental impact of the fashion industry?
- buying less but higher quality;
- supporting sustainable brands;
- reusing and repairing clothes;
- all of the above;
- I believe my choices do not make a difference

How important do you find education on sustainability for changing consumer habits?
(1 = not important at all, 5 = extremely important)

Module 2: The Reality of the Fashion Industry
Which of the following impacts of the fashion industry do you find the most concerning?
- water and soil pollution;
- greenhouse-gas emissions;
- unfair working conditions;
- excessive waste generation;
- all of the above

What connection do you see between low clothing prices and the working conditions of textile workers?

Module 3: Change Is Possible
What is the main advantage of choosing sustainable materials?
- lower environmental impact;
- better consumer health;
- longer garment lifespan;
- all of the above

Which information do you usually look for (or should look for) on clothing labels before buying?

Module 4: Take Action
Which sustainable habit could you start practising today?

Why are repairing and reusing clothing considered sustainable actions?
- they reduce textile waste;
- they save money and resources;
- they support the circular economy;
- all of the above

Module 5: Sustainable Changes in Everyday Life
How often do you prioritise quality over quantity when buying clothing?
(1 = never, 5 = always)

How do you think supporting local brands or buying second-hand clothing can create a positive impact in your community?

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

Evaluation Questionnaire for the Textile Education Programme

What did you like most about the training?

_____

_____

What would you improve? What did you miss or find unsatisfactory?

_____

_____

Trainer Evaluation
5 – excellent, 4 – good, 3 – average, 2 – poor, 1 – inadequate
Expertise: _____
Clarity of explanation: _____
Delivery style: : _____
Attitude and communication with participants: _____
Opportunities for participation, expressing opinions and asking questions: ____

Evaluation of Training Content
5 – excellent, 4 – good, 3 – average, 2 – poor, 1 – inadequate
Relevance of content: _____
Consistency with expectations: _____
Balance between practical and theoretical parts: _____
Usefulness of the acquired knowledge in practice: _____

Evaluation of Training Delivery
5 – excellent, 4 – good, 3 – average, 2 – poor, 1 – inadequate
Usefulness of provided materials during training_____
Usefulness of materials for further self-study or independent work:_____
Appropriateness of schedule (timing, duration, session structure): _____
Suitability of the training venue: _____
Adequacy of equipment used (computer, projection quality): _____

VALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

Evaluation of Training Organisation

5 – excellent, 4 – good, 3 – average, 2 – poor, 1 – inadequate

Communication about the training: _____

Organisation and flow of the training: _____

Responsiveness and communication of the organiser (emails, phone calls, quality of information and feedback, etc.): _____

Availability of support before and during the training: _____

Are you interested in further training on sustainability topics?

YES NO

Would you recommend this training to others (friends, colleagues, acquaintances)?

YES NO

Thank You for your participation!

7. ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

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8. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional resource available at:
https://premiumferme.com/sl/pages/sustainability

Sustainable Adult Education

Learning to re-create the world with sustainable textile behaviour

Certificate of Completion

_____

has successfully completed the educational program:

_____

The program took place from _____ to _____.

_____

Instructor

_____

Location and Date

Slovenska univerza za tretje življenjsko obdobje

Co-funded by the European Union