

SUSTAINABLE ADVOCATES

Encouraging Sustainable Choices
Among Young VET Learners



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF FAST FASHION



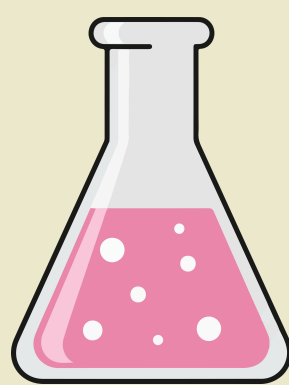
WHAT IS FAST FASHION?

The global fashion industry now produces over 100 billion garments per year which is more than double the volume manufactured in 2000; while the average number of times a garment is worn before disposal has dropped by 36% in the same period.

POLLUTION FROM CLOTHING PRODUCTION

The fashion industry uses an estimated 215 trillion litres of water annually, relying on around 15,000 different chemicals in the textile manufacturing process.

Toxic wastewater from dyeing and finishing accounts for approximately 20% of global industrial water pollution.



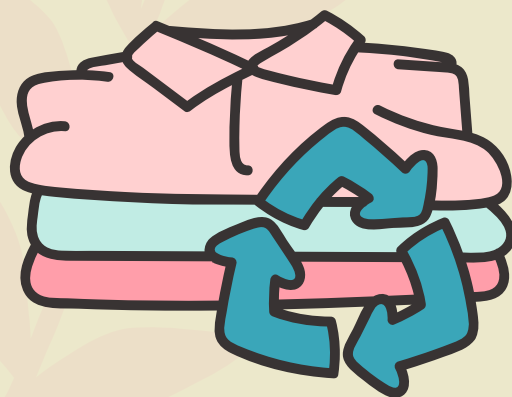
TEXTILE WASTE AND LANDFILLS

Around 92 million tonnes of textile waste are generated globally each year.

Most fast fashion items are made from synthetic fibres that can persist in landfill for over 200 years, and only around 1% of clothing is recycled back into new garments.

CARBON EMISSIONS & CLIMATE CHANGE

The fashion industry accounts for approximately 8–10% of global greenhouse gas emissions annually. Without significant intervention, emissions from the sector are projected to reach 2.8 billion tonnes per year by 2030.



RECYCLING CHALLENGES

Globally, less than 1% of clothing is recycled into new clothing.

The Circularity Gap Report (2024) found that only 0.3% of the resources used in global textile production each year come from recycled sources, largely because blended fabrics make fibre separation technically and economically unviable.

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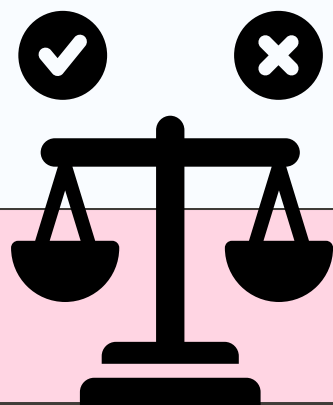
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Ethical Issues in Fast Fashion



<2% LIVING WAGE:

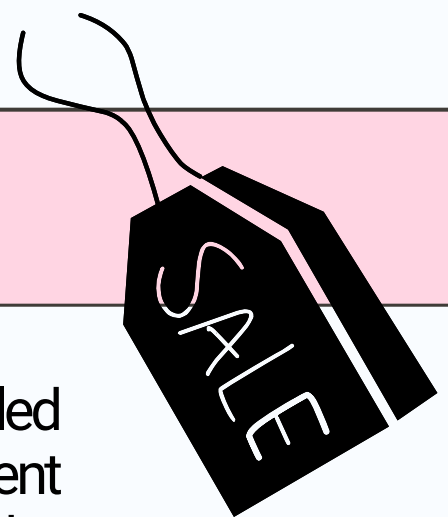
- Less than 2% of garment workers globally earn a living wage that covers their basic needs, determined based on local prices for housing and utilities, transportation, food and water, healthcare, childcare, education and savings.

60-80% FEMALE WORKFORCE:

- Nearly 60% of garment workers globally are women, reaching nearly 80% in some regions. Many of them face systemic gender-based discrimination and unsafe working conditions.

1,134 LIVES LOST:

- The 2013 Rana Plaza disaster, which killed 1,134 people, remains the deadliest garment factory accident in history, highlighting the severe lack of worker safety in fast fashion supply chains.



>100 MILLION CHILDREN AFFECTED:

- UNICEF estimates that more than 100 million children are affected in the garment and footwear supply chain globally; as workers, as children of working parents and as community members near farms and factories.



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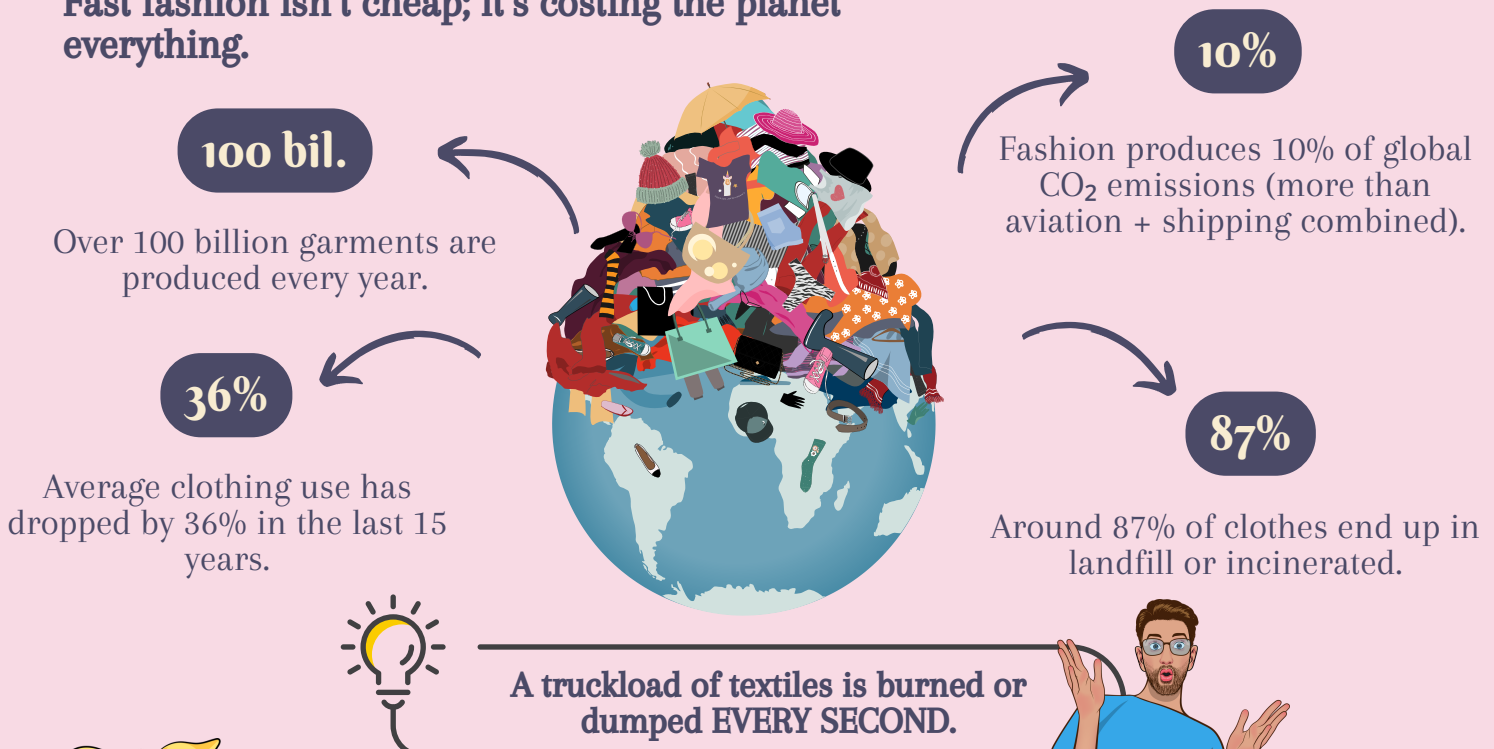


Sustainable Fashion Alternatives

Your clothes. Your impact. Your choice.

What's Wrong With Fast Fashion?

Fast fashion isn't cheap; it's costing the planet everything.



What Are You Wearing? Check the Label!

Not all clothes are equal. Some materials are better for your health and for the planet.

Be careful

- Polyester.
- Acrylic.
- Nylon.
- Lycra, spandex.

Red flags on labels

- "Wrinkle-free".
- "Stain-resistant".
- Mixed fabrics with lots of synthetics.
- No trusted certification.

Better materials

- Organic cotton.
- Linen, silk.
- Hemp.
- Tencel.
- Recycled materials.

A better choice

- Simple fabric composition.
- Certifications like GOTS, OEKO-TEX, or Fair Trade.



A T-shirt may look normal, but it can still contain plastic and harmful chemicals.

What Can You Do?

- Buy 50% less, wear twice as long.
- Choose natural fibres over synthetics.
- Go second-hand → save up to 80% CO₂ per item.
- Repair instead of replacing.
- Upcycle (old → new style).
- Swap clothes with friends.
- Wash at 30°C → saves up to 40% energy.
- Install a microplastic filter on your washing machine.
- Air dry (skip the dryer).
- Ask: "Will I wear this 30 times?"
- Avoid impulse buying.
- Donate or recycle properly.

Eco-Friendly Brands

Vinted

Organic Basics

Nudie Jeans Co

VEJA

patagonia

THINKING MU

ECOALF

allbirds

Before buying something new, ask yourself:
"Do I really need this; or is it just fast fashion talking?"

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HOW TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE WARDROBE

Look better. Spend smarter. Waste less.



1. DON'T SHOP BORED

Most bad fashion decisions happen when you're: **bored, scrolling or influenced by trends.**

Fact: People buy 60% more clothes than 15 years ago; but wear them half as long



TIP

Wait 24 hours before buying!

TIP



If it doesn't match at least 3 outfits, skip it!

2. BUILD YOUR "GO-TO OUTFITS"

Create 5–10 outfits you can always rely on. This helps to:
Saves time.
Stops overbuying.



3. SECOND-HAND IS SMART

Thrift shops and apps like Vinted are full of hidden gems.

Second-hand shopping can cut CO₂ impact by up to 80% per item.



TIP

Look for quality second-hand brands!

TIP



One old item creates a new, unique style!

4. UPGRADE WHAT YOU ALREADY OWN

Don't throw it away — transform it!
Cut, dye, patch and customise.



5. KNOW YOUR STYLE, NOT TRENDS

Trends change every week. Your style shouldn't. Ask yourself:

- **What do I actually wear?**
- **What makes me feel good?**



TIP

If you won't wear it in a year, don't buy it!

TIP



You don't need more clothes. What you need are smarter habits!.

6. THINK "COST PER WEAR"

Cheap isn't always better:

- **€10 shirt** worn twice = **€5 per wear.**
- **€50 shirt** worn 50 times = **€1 per wear.**



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FAST FASHION

VS.

SUSTAINABLE FASHION

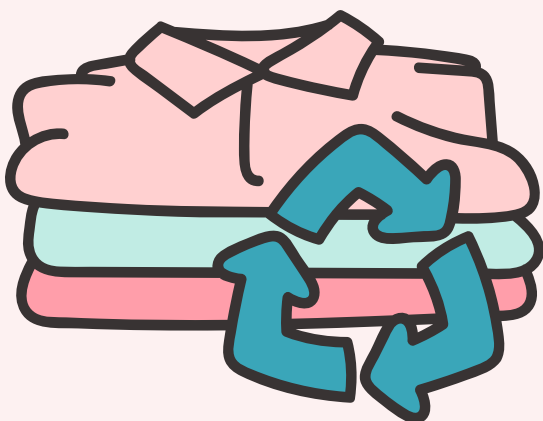
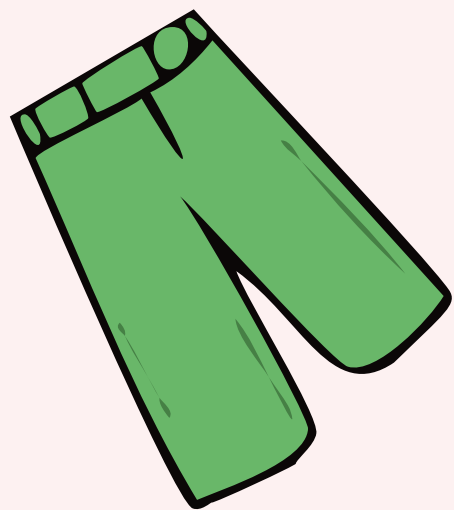


THE LIFECYCLE GAP

Fast fashion items are often designed for just 7 to 10 wears, whereas sustainable high-quality garments are built to last 50 to 100+ wears, significantly lowering the cost per wear.

OCEAN POLLUTION

Laundering synthetic clothes releases 500,000 tons of microfibres into the ocean every year, which is the equivalent to tossing 50 billion plastic bottles into the sea.



SECOND-HAND SURGE

Buying second-hand clothing can reduce a garment's climate impact by 42% and its water scarcity footprint by 53% compared to buying new.

E-COMMERCE WASTE

Around 30% of online purchases are returned. Due to high processing costs, many fast fashion brands landfill or burn these items rather than reselling them.



CIRCULAR ADVANTAGE

Extending the life of a garment by just 9 months reduces its carbon, water and waste footprints by approximately 20–30%.

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The Life Cycle of a Garment

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Production

Producing a single cotton t-shirt requires an estimated 2,700 litres of fresh water, which is enough to meet one person's drinking needs for 2.5 years!

Textile manufacturing is also responsible for 20% of global industrial water pollution, primarily through the dyeing and finishing process.



Buying & Use

Over the past 20 years, the number of times a garment is worn before disposal has fallen by 36%.

On average, today an item of clothing is worn just 7 or 8 times before being discarded!



Care & Repair

A single laundry load of polyester clothing can release up to 700,000 microplastic fibres into the water system.

Washing at cooler temperatures on shorter cycles can reduce microfibre shedding by up to 30%.



Disposal

Less than 1% of used clothing is currently recycled into new garments.

An estimated 87% of used clothes are incinerated or sent to landfill; and the equivalent of a full refuse truck of textiles is burned or buried every single second.



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