

Workshop 2, topic a: The Impact of the Fashion Industry

Learning Objectives

Learners will:

- Think critically about needs and wants
- Identify the environmental and human impacts of the global fashion industry
- Think critically about these impacts and their own use of fashion
- Use problem solving tools to map root causes, consequences and solutions
- Learn about how others are making change happen in the clothing industry

Why the fashion industry?

The fashion industry employs over half a million people in the UK and over 30 million globally, fostering and enabling creativity and self-expression. As with any major industry, fashion impacts energy production, land and water use and biodiversity. 'Fast fashion', a trend since the 1990s, conjures up images of the latest fashions, busy shoppers and cheap clothes tags. This has brought opportunities to many but our increase in fashion consumption at cheap prices has led to an increase in waste, and the clothes we buy can sometimes come at a high environmental and human cost. News headlines have highlighted poor pay and conditions in garment factories and many farmers who grow cotton for our clothes also face hardships. These issues have prompted campaign groups, as well as many others within the fashion industry, to call for change and there are good examples of how more ethical fashion can improve the lives of workers and farmers around the world.

Resources

- PowerPoint: Fashion
- Issue tree [demonstration video \(30 seconds\)](#).
- Case study choices
 - [Labour Behind the Label](#)
 - [Ethical Consumer](#)
 - [Love Your Clothes](#)
 - [Clean Clothes Campaign](#)
 - [Fair Trade School Uniforms](#)
 - [Redress](#)
 - [The Uniform Project](#)
 - ['Where's the impact' cards](#)

Optional Resources

- [UNICEF Needs and Wants](#)
- [Useful graphs and charts about waste](#)
- [Behind the logo session](#): introduces learners to the life of a sweatshop worker in a sportswear factory and the causes and consequences of the use of cheap labour in poorer countries.
- [Fair Trade Wales](#): A wide range of resources to develop understanding of how global trade works, the challenges faced by producers and the ways people are trying to bring about change.
- [Website](#) which evaluates the pros and cons of many fashion brands in terms of both environmental impact and ethicality.
- [2 minute film that introduces the idea of Fast fashion](#), its positive aspects, its negative ones and how it can be improved.
- A [5 minute video that explores the phenomenon of Fast Fashion](#) and its impacts on the consumer, the workers, the retailers and the environment.
- Author Lucy Siegle gives a [Ted Talk](#) regarding fashion.
- Known as the first ethical and 'slow fashion' brand, this is [People Tree's website](#) and more specifically its story.
- An 18 minute video where [comedian John Oliver](#) talks about the negative impacts that our consumerist attitude has on the people who are producing our clothes.
- The [3 minute film trailer](#) to the True Cost which exposes the unethical and unsustainable model of the current fashion industry.

Starter (slide 1-2 – 5 minutes)

Discuss what you will learn in this workshop.

Then ask learners to discuss their views on fashion in pairs:

- What was the last item of clothing/fashion you bought? Why did you buy it? Which brand did you choose? Why?
- Where do you shop? Why?
- What factors influence your shopping decisions?

Activity 1: Wants, needs and fashion (slides 3-4 – 10 minutes)

In groups, ask learners to come up with a list of things that they need – that they couldn't live without. Ask them to negotiate until they agree in their groups. Discuss as a class any points of disagreement. **Optional resource:** Use

the [UNICEF Needs and Wants](#) cards to facilitate the needs/wants activity discussion – ask learners to categorise the cards into things they need and things they want, and to add anything they think is missing.

Discuss: Do we **need** fashion? Or is it just something that is a want? Why/Why not? How is fashion of benefit?

Activity 2: The story of a pair of jeans (slide 5 to 19 – 30 minutes)

Tell the story of a pair of jeans using the slides and a large map of the world to follow the story of a pair of jeans. As you talk through the slides, draw/show on a map of the world the journey of the jeans and talk through the short questions on each slide.

In groups, pick a section of the story and draw a timeline of what happens in that part of the supply chain.

Key questions to stimulate drawing: How is it transported? Where does it come from? Who is involved? Where do they travel from? What resources do they need? Where do they come from? Where do they go next?

Emphasise the drawings can be made up of symbols, words, sketches – they don't have to be artistic!

Optional activity: Use '[Where's the impact](#)' cards in place of the drawing activity. Go through an example, then put learners in groups of 3-6 to work through rest of components then share environmental and human impacts of their components. These cards are available from CAT for £21.

Activity 3: Identifying causes, consequences and solutions (slide 20-22 – 50 minutes)

Use 'why, why, why chain' with learners using one of the starting questions below:

Question ideas

- People increasingly buy 'throwaway fashion'. Why is this happening?
- Why do people buy so many clothes?
- Why do lots of clothes end up in landfill?

Start the chain as a whole group and drill down into one or two branches. Then put learners in pairs or small groups to develop the 'why, why, why' chains further. Ask learners to pass around their chains, looking for similarities and differences.

Consequence wheel: In groups, ask learners to put the problem statement in the centre of the circle. On the next ring of the circle they add the effects or impacts of that problem. In the next circle, they add the effects of those issues and so on.

Issue tree

Bring all learners together to create an 'issue tree'. Quickly watch the [demonstration video \(30 seconds\)](#). Put your 'problem' statement at the root of the tree (for example, 'fast fashion'). Ask learners to use answers from 'why, why, why' to populate the roots of the tree (the root causes of the problem). Give an opportunity for learners to add additional root causes.

Ask learners to use the consequence wheel answers to start to populate the branches of the tree (the impacts). Give learners an opportunity to add more impacts.

Opportunity tree: This activity moves learners towards thinking towards solutions rather than just problems.

Ask learners to use post it notes to start to turn the problems into objectives. For example, 'Poor working conditions' becomes 'improve working conditions'

Activity 4: Making a difference (slide 23 – 20 minutes)

In groups, ask learners to choose a case study to look at and to work together to answer the following questions about the case studies. They should briefly report back to the class:

- What change are they trying to achieve?
- Who are they trying to influence?
- How are they trying to influence the decision makers?
- What action are they taking?

- What was the outcome?
- Can you identify other possible positive and negative outcomes?

Choices

[Labour Behind the Label](#): Labour Behind the Label are campaigning for factory workers to be paid a living wage. They are also campaigning for families affected by the Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh in April 2013 to receive compensation for their loss of earnings and medical costs.

[Ethical Consumer](#): Ethical Consumer rates the ethics of businesses scoring them based on their approach to human rights, the environment, animal testing and so on. Ethical Consumer aims to make global business more sustainable through consumer pressure.

[Love Your Clothes](#): Love Your Clothes aims to raise awareness of the value of clothes and help us make the most of the clothes we already have. They focus on encouraging people to think about way they purchase, use and dispose of clothes.

[Clean Clothes Campaign](#): The Clean Clothes Campaign is dedicated to improving working conditions and supporting the empowerment of workers in the global garment and sportswear industries.

[Fair Trade School Uniforms](#): Fair Trade Wales are supporting schools in Wales to have Fair Trade school uniforms.

[Redress](#): Redress is an NGO with a mission to promote environmental sustainability in the fashion industry by reducing textile waste, pollution, water and energy consumption.

[The Uniform Project](#): Uniform Project was born in May 2009, when one girl pledged to wear a Little Black Dress for 365 days as an exercise in sustainable fashion.

Plenary: Reflection (slide 24 – 10 minutes)

Ask learners to complete the following table (can be done individually or collectively):

Know	Want	Learnt	Surprise
What do we already know?	What do we want to know?	What have we learned?	What surprised you?