

SAFEST

EDUCATIONAL & AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES



ABOUT



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INTRODUCTION

A woman in a dark hoodie and light blue jeans stands at the front of a room, addressing a group of people seated in a circle. The room has light-colored walls and a wooden floor. A large whiteboard with the word 'fashion' written on it is visible in the background. The scene is dimly lit, with the main light source coming from the front, creating a focused atmosphere.

The following pages present the activities created as a result of the research phase of the "Slow Fashion for the Fashion Industry (SAFEST)" project and tested during the mobility held in Valencia (Spain), from 17 to 21 April \2024.

The activities proposed below were adapted to the context in which they were being tested and to the diverse group of participants who took part in the mobility.

The activities were well received by the participants and contributed to a shared discussion on the fashion consumption choices of each of the participants, which was deepened with the help of presentations on the main sustainability standards and key concepts for conscious choices (materials, social impact, reuse, cost).

Following the feedback received, the SAFEST Consortium presents the following selection of activities so that they can be directly replicated - with some minor adaptations - in other local contexts and/or with other target groups by anyone looking for educational and/or awareness-raising activities on the topic of sustainability in fashion.

WHY?

Since it entered the common vocabulary, the concept of 'Sustainability' has taken on different meanings and extensions, applied from time to time to the relevant contexts.

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to issues of environmental sustainability, which has led the textile sector to come under heavy criticism regarding the environmental and human health impacts of residues of substances on products and associated production processes. The topic of ecology is raised by issues related to environmental emergencies, waste of natural resources, energy costs, global warming, global overpopulation and the consequent depletion of habitats and scarcity of raw materials, the toxicity of certain industrial products, air and water pollution, and waste disposal.

Being a sustainable company in the ecological sense means today, consequently, **making choices capable of lowering the environmental impact of one's production activities, containing consumption, designing and manufacturing objects that, due to the raw materials used, the way they are processed, and their behaviour at the end of their life, reduce their impact on the environment.**

Hence the commitment to eliminate, where technically possible and truly 'sustainable', certain hazardous substances or limit their concentration and use while waiting for technically valid alternatives, to improve existing production processes.

The issue of energy efficiency, resulting from the possible reduction of energy costs, is also addressed, as well as the containment of the consumption of water resources required for the product processing and wastewater purification processes.

But true 'sustainability' does not only mean 'ecology'. In this sense, being a sustainable company tout court means not only respect for the environment, saving raw materials and economic resources, but also respect for the health of workers and consumers, respect for human rights, rationalisation of creative and production processes, and stimulation for innovation and research.

In a nutshell, all this could fall under the word 'responsibility'; it is no coincidence that those involved in sustainability in large companies often work in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) departments.

From a general point of view, to fully address the issue of sustainability in a company today, it is necessary to start from the consideration of the interests of all stakeholders involved in the conception, production, supply, sale and use of a product, i.e. up to the end consumer and local communities.

Some strategic variables capable of generating competitive advantages can be summarised as follows:

- dialogue and cooperation with raw material suppliers to share and respect social and environmental standards;
- control of the supply chain, i.e. product safety at the various stages of manufacture, processing and transport, integration of environmental factors into the production chain, prevention of corruption and exploitation of workers;
- propulsive drive for innovation and research, i.e. thinking about the life cycle of one's own product from eco-design to increasing the percentage of raw materials deriving from reuse, re-use, regeneration, which requires dialogue and cooperation with research facilities and universities;

- environmental aspects in all processes (including sales) which means environmental strategy, prevention and control of pollution (soil, fire), protection of water resources, minimisation of the environmental impacts of energy consumption, management of atmospheric emissions, management of the environmental impacts of transport, of the use and disposal of products/services;
- quality of work and employee qualification, i.e. promotion of industrial relations, responsible management of restructuring, career management and training, improvement of health and safety conditions, enhancement of skills, respect for freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, non-discrimination;
- relations with local communities, i.e. product safety in the end-use phase, transparent communication, sharing of values, economic, social and cultural development of the territory, post-consumer collection initiatives.

This can be pursued and achieved through a **radical cultural change** that companies must undertake as a result of two inescapable facts:

1. the realisation that it is no longer possible to go on according to the same production models, due to increasing scarcity of resources and sudden changes in legislation;
2. the increased awareness on the part of consumers of sustainability-related issues, leading to the need for total transparency towards them.

At the end of this long and difficult process, consumer perception will have to change from: "this product costs x", to "this product IS WORTH x".

Overall, thus, the fashion industry today stands at a critical juncture, with an urgent need to shift towards more sustainable practices. This pivot is not just about the industry adopting greener materials or more ethical labor practices; it also hinges on the role of consumers. The transformation towards sustainable fashion can only be successful if it is accompanied by comprehensive awareness-raising and education efforts aimed at consumers.

Firstly, education plays a pivotal role in demystifying the concept of sustainable fashion. For many consumers, the idea remains abstract or bogged down in jargon. Clear, accessible information about what sustainability means—in terms of environmental impact, social justice, and economic viability—can empower consumers to make informed choices.

Secondly, awareness campaigns can shed light on the true cost of fast fashion, highlighting not just the environmental degradation it causes but also the human cost in terms of labor rights abuses. By bringing these issues to the forefront of consumer consciousness, it becomes possible to foster a more empathetic and responsible approach to fashion consumption.

Moreover, consumer education can debunk the myth that sustainable fashion is inherently more expensive or less accessible. By highlighting the long-term cost-effectiveness and value of sustainable garments, as well as the diverse range of options available, consumers can be encouraged to explore sustainable fashion brands and practices.

Furthermore, awareness-raising can promote the idea of fashion as a form of personal expression that does not necessitate constant consumption. It can encourage consumers to think creatively about their fashion choices—whether through supporting ethical brands, exploring second-hand markets, or adopting a more minimalist wardrobe.

Ultimately, the shift towards sustainable fashion requires a cultural change that values quality over quantity, ethics over expediency, and long-term viability over short-term gains. By investing in consumer education and awareness, stakeholders in the fashion industry can cultivate a more discerning and responsible consumer base. This, in turn, creates a demand that can drive the industry-wide adoption of sustainable practices, ensuring that fashion not only looks good but also does good for the planet and its people.

**READY TO DO
ACTIVITIES**

ANALYSIS OF ONE'S OWN CHOICES

In search of subconscious values

Duration

60-90 min

Participants

No minimum number. They can work individually or in groups.

Materials

Pen and paper, mobile devices

Description

The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) will be used to facilitate access to the subliminal thoughts that guide us in our purchasing processes.

Participants will be given the task of having to select a total of 10 items of clothing to buy, representing everything that is desirable to them when purchasing an item of clothing.

Description

Participants will be asked to classify the selected images into different categories, e.g. sustainability, luxury, quality, affordability.

Participants will be encouraged to source their images from online sites, press advertisements, photo albums, magazines and the like, and to consider the implications of their respective choices.

Results

According to Zaltman (1997), 95 per cent of what consumers think and feel is never verbally expressed; mechanisms are needed to elicit responses. By making choices and making them explicit, participants are led to shed light on what processes guide us in our purchasing choices and what psychological values are associated with the fashion experience. Ultimately, the value and self-definition mechanisms that guide us in the shopping experience can also be verified.

UNDERSTANDING PROCESSES

	The True Cost
Duration	90 min
Participants	No minimum number
Materials	Projector, laptop, internet connection or offline documentary
Description	<p>Through the viewing of the documentary The True Cost, participants will explore the processes underlying the fast fashion industry. Awarded with several nominations, the documentary aims to explore the hidden sides of an industry heavily present in our days of which many are unaware of the underlying processes.</p>

Results

The activity will be initiated and concluded by a group discussion that will serve to monitor the different levels of pre- and post-viewing knowledge and emotional activation. This will assess the attitudes, opinions and awareness of the group of participants.

COMPARING MODELS

	Study visit - Lona/Primark
Duration	4 hours circa
Participants	No minimum number.
Materials	n/a
Description	<p>The activity aims to compare two models related to the fashion industry. The different production and sales models will be compared. In this way, comparisons will also be elicited between the value added by the production behind the items involved.</p>

Results

Thanks also to the mural on the outside of the chain, the aim of the activity is to highlight the production chain behind the products that are purchased by the consumer.



COMPARING MODELS

	Analysis of an advertising campaign - media analysis
Duration	90 minutes
Participants	No minimum number. They work in groups.
Materials	Computers, cell phones, writing materials
Description	<p>The idea behind the activity is to compare a marketing campaign of fast fashion companies with that of companies that incorporate sustainability and ethics into their production processes.</p>

Results

It aims to develop in participants the critical ability to identify the messages conveyed through various corporate communications, and what drives us as consumers in choosing our purchases.

AWARENESS RAISING

	What do we wear?
Duration	60-90 minutes
Participants	No minimum number. They work individually.
Materials	Paper and pen, mobile devices
Description	<p>The activity is structured in two different moments. In the first phase, a questionnaire will be submitted to identify our carbon footprint related to the clothing we use. Subsequently, the clothes worn by each person will be analyzed. Through the label, participants will be asked to identify the components and geographical origin of each item.</p>

Results

The activity aims to increase awareness about the choices we make in our daily lives. The carbon footprint shows us the consequences of our choices and the resources used individually, furthermore, the analysis of the composition and geographical origin of products will provide insight into the clothing industry allowing us to understand the production and distribution of products.

SELF-ENTREPRENEURSHIP

	And what about you?
Duration	180 minutes
Participants	No minimum number. They work in groups.
Materials	Paper and pen, mobile devices
Description	<p>The steps related to the creation, management, and operation of a fashion sector business will be illustrated. Participants will be invited to find solutions to create, promote, and manage different branches of an ethical and responsible sector business.</p>

Results

Through the developed knowledge, participants will be tested in the challenge of creating businesses in this niche sector.

UNDERSTANDING THE SUPPLY CHAIN

	The product life cycle
Duration	Sixty to ninety minutes
Participants	No minimum number.
Materials	Projector, laptop
Description	<p>The life cycle of a product (Levis 501) will be presented starting from the textile components up to its disposal and/or reuse. Analyzing the different processes will allow participants to focus on the different treatments and resources used in each phase of the process.</p>

Results

Through this activity, we aim to focus on the complexity behind the production and marketing process of each item we choose to purchase and wear. The activity will also raise awareness about the amount of resources actually used in the production chain.

CREATION

	DIY
Duration	90-120 minutes
Participants	No minimum number. They can work individually or in a group.
Materials	Needle, thread, scissors, recycled materials.
Description	Through the use of recycled materials, participants will be invited to create small design objects and everyday items such as wallets or placemats.

Results

The disposal of clothing represents a problem of great impact for which a sustainable solution has not yet been found. The speed at which products are purchased and their limited use, as well as their poor durability, pose everyone with a problem that is not easily solved. Pollution is one of the greatest challenges of modern times. The Western consumption model implies that society and individual consumers question and find solutions that can have a short-term impact, so rethinking and finding a creative use of products becomes an urgent necessity in today's world.



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