The Consequence of Fast Fashion

By James Leeder, age 9

The definition of fast fashion is to produce trendy clothes in the cheapest and fastest way. According to The Independent, the fashion industry is worth £2 trillion and £100m of used clothing goes to landfill in the UK each year. The average daily wage of a garment worker is £2 and an estimated 170million child laborers around the world works in the textile industry.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Shopping has become a way of life, a weekly pastime and sometimes an addiction for some. The main issue is that we don’t keep our clothes for a long time. For most people, they like to buy new clothes every month therefore clothes need to be cheap and trendy. Fast fashion is becoming disposable, easily accessible such as purchasing online and in supermarkets. The fashion industry can sometimes make you feel ‘out of trend’ very quickly.

Fashion chains like H&M and Zara introduce new styles as often as every two weeks. As soon as photos from fashion week go up online, there’s an immediate reaction of fast fashion stores rushing to duplicate the trend.[[2]](#footnote-2) How do they do it? By getting it made overseas from the cheapest manufacturer.

What are the knock-on effect of fast fashion and who makes our clothes? According to an article by Reverse Resources, roughly 40% of all garments are produced in China, Bangladesh and India, 20% comes from nearby countries (Pakistan, Vietnam, Indonesia, etc.) and the rest 40% from all around the globe. [[3]](#footnote-3)

Bangladesh is the worlds second-largest garment producer. In 2013, Rana Plaza building, a clothing factory in Bangladesh collapsed which killed over 1,200 Bangladeshi factory workers due to the bad working environment. [[4]](#footnote-4)

"Consumers have a big responsibility. They get things so cheap. They have to think about how these companies are doing business. The multinationals take our blood and our sweat,” said Nazma Akter, a former child factory worker and founder of the Awaj Foundation, which fights for labour rights in Bangladesh. [[5]](#footnote-5)

Before you buy another item of clothing, ask yourself, is it necessary? Is it another throwaway fashion to satisfy my desire? Do I really need it or is it just another item that will end up on the landfill? Who made my clothes?

“Buying clothing and treating it as if it is disposable is putting a huge added weight on the environment and is simply unsustainable” said Elizabeth L Cline, author of Overdresses, The Shocking High Cost of Cheap Fashion.

We can help the environment by changing where we shop and what we buy. For example, I recycle my old clothes, I turn my trousers into shorts when they are too short, I decorate my t-shirt to disguise any removable stains and lastly I donate my old clothes to a charity. I like shopping in charity shops because I find unusual clothes or toys. As my dad once told me, one man’s trash is another man’s treasure.





1. The Independent, the true cost of ‘fast fashion’. 20th April 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.lifehack.org/articles/money/8-reasons-rethink-fast-fashion.html [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://reverseresources.net/news/how-much-does-garment-industry-actually-waste [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Post Magazine. The true cost of your cheap clothes: slave wages for Bangladesh factory workers, 11th June 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/article/1970431/true-cost-your-cheap-clothes-slave-wages-bangladesh-factory [↑](#footnote-ref-5)