



# GENERATING MOMENTUM FOR OUR WORLD



Photo credit: PlanetCare

## FAST FASHION AND THE SDGs EDUCATORS GUIDE 2025

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## Dear Educators

Thank you for joining us at this year's *Generating Momentum for Our World* conference!

We know that you are all busy, but these events are a special opportunity to bring together students and educators here in Manitoba to learn and **be inspired to take action towards some of the biggest challenges facing our world.**

We hope you have an incredible day with us, and you leave feeling energized and excited. At the end of the event, we would appreciate a few moments of your time to tell us how we did. We have a short online survey that helps us ensure we are meeting your needs and putting on the best possible events. You'll find the QR code to the survey at the bottom of this page.

*Thank you!*

If you're not already, please subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter **Global Classrooms**, which is made specifically for you! Each month you'll receive great learning resources, features on Manitoba students who are making a difference and reminders of some of our great programming. Sign up on our website (<https://www.mcic.ca/signup>).

We look forward to hearing about the amazing activities that you and your students will work on after today's conference!

Sincerely,

The MCIC Team



SCAN HERE

←  
Let us know how we did! Fill out our event survey here.

Events such as this one wouldn't be possible without funding from Global Affairs Canada. We would like to acknowledge and thank Global Affairs Canada for the funding and support.



In partnership with

Canada



## About MCIC

The Manitoba Council for International Cooperation, or MCIC, works to support, connect and amplify the work of our members and partners, while directly engaging and collaborating with Manitobans of all ages for global sustainability.

**We are committed to cultivating global citizenship and working towards a just world.**

To learn more about MCIC, our members and programs, please visit [www.mcic.ca](http://www.mcic.ca).

### Key Programs

- Classroom workshops (for all grades) throughout the school year
- Annual reading packages for global students
- Educator and student awards – **applications are due May 30, 2025**
  - Global Citizenship Award for Educators
  - Outstanding Take Action Project Award (Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability 40S)

*Learn more and apply* <https://www.mcic.ca/educators-and-youth/educator-student-awards>

- Voices for Change – an annual spoken word poetry program centered on the SDGs  
Watch the 2025 Voice for Change performance, *Fight for Home*, at <https://bit.ly/V4C2025>
- International Development Week (a Canadian tradition held during the first full week of February)
- Monthly e-newsletter for educators, *Global Classrooms*
- And of course, Generating Momentum for Our World conferences!

### GET IN TOUCH WITH US!

For any questions or requests, email us [youth@mcic.ca](mailto:youth@mcic.ca)  
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Follow us on social media! We're on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter (X).



## Learning Objectives

Participating students will:

1. Become familiar with the **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**
2. Learn how the SDGs are impacted by the fashion industry
3. Learn how to **plan and take action** toward sustainable fashion and achieving the SDGs
4. Learn creative and **empowering skills**
5. Develop and strengthen **teamwork skills**



## Curriculum Connections

DID YOU KNOW

*Generating Momentum for Our World* conferences are specifically designed to fit within Manitoba's curriculum?

This year's theme, "Fast Fashion", is a unique topic as it touches on all 17 SDGs, highlighting the interconnectedness of the goals. During the conference, we will also explore key concepts including **global awareness**, **global citizenship** and **sustainable practices**.

Find a complete list of the curriculum connections on the following page.



S-100	Collaborate with others to establish and carry out goals and responsibilities
S-102	Make decisions that reflect fairness and equality in their interactions with others
S-103	Make decisions that reflect the principles of sustainable development
S-105	Recognize bias and discrimination and propose solutions (e.g., racism, ageism, heterosexism)
S-303	Evaluate personal assumptions based on new information and ideas
S-304	Distinguish fact from opinion and interpretation
S-307	Compare differing viewpoints regarding global issues
S-405	Articulate their beliefs and perspectives on issues
S-301	Consider the context of events, accounts, ideas, and interpretations
S-107	Make decisions that reflect social responsibility
S-404	Elicit, clarify, and respond to questions, ideas, and diverse points of view in discussions
KC-002	Describe the impact of various factors on quality of life in Canada and elsewhere in the world (e.g., access to shelter, food, water, health care, education; globalization)
VC-001	Respect the inherent dignity of all people
VC-004	Be willing to take action to support the quality of life for people around the world
KC-004	Describe ways in which personal actions may affect quality of life for people elsewhere in the world (e.g., consumer choices, conservation actions, sharing of resources, letters, and petitions)
VP-013	Demonstrate concern for people affected by discrimination, injustice, or abuse of power
KL-026	Identify human activities contributing to climate change
KE-054	Give examples of the environmental and social impact of consumerism in the local community and in a society of Europe or the Americas
KE-05	Describe sustainable development issues in a society of Europe or the Americas
VL-009	Be willing to take actions to help sustain the natural environment in Canada and the world
KP-044	Identify ways in which government decisions may affect human impact on the natural environment
VE-017	Be willing to consider the consequences of their consumer choices
KE-049	Identify issues related to work and trade in a society of Asia, Africa, or Australasia (e.g., child labour, exploitation, cooperatives, fair trade)
KL-028	Evaluate Canadian concerns and commitments regarding environmental stewardship and sustainability
VL-007	Be willing to make personal choices to sustain the environment
VG-012	Be willing to consider local, national, and global interests in their decisions and actions
KG-034	Give examples of Canada's connections with other nations (e.g., trade, communication, environment, entertainment, sports)
KE-050	Give examples of the cultural, political, and economic impact of globalization on Canada (e.g., transnational corporations)
KE-051	Analyze possible consequences of their consumer choices
KG-035	Identify implications of more-developed countries extracting resources from less-developed countries (e.g., social, political, economic, environmental)



## Introduction: Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also called “The Global Goals”, were created by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030, all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 goals are found below.



There are 17 goals and 169 individual targets. Learn more [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/)

The 17 SDGs are interconnected (see intersectionality in the Glossary). They recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.



*What goal are YOU most passionate about? If you need help introducing the SDGs to your students, get in touch with us for a classroom workshop!*

***The Sustainable Development Goals are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.***



## The 5Ps of Sustainable Development

Another way to think about and categorize the SDGs is through the “5Ps”. This may help students see how these big global issues are connected. No one “P” is more important than another.

### **PEOPLE: Placing humanity at the centre**

We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

### **PLANET: Preserving our natural resources**

We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

SDG 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15

### **PROSPERITY: Ensuring inclusive economic growth**

We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

SDG 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11

### **PEACE: Cultivating a culture of peace and justice**

We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

Peace is a key aspect needed to achieve all 17 goals, but SDG 16 is specifically tied to the “Peace” category.

### **PARTNERSHIP: Collaborating for collective impact**

We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

Partnerships and collaboration are key aspects needed to achieve all 17 goals, but SDG 17 highlights “Partnerships”.



Although the SDGs were agreed upon by the member states within the United Nations, achieving the SDGs involve all entities in the international community. Read [Unlocking Sustainable Development: The 5 Ps of SDGs for a Better Future](#) for more information.



## Fast Fashion and the SDGs

What do the SDGs mean for the fashion industry? If you consider that:

- The fashion industry is one of the largest employers in the world (especially of women) in often dangerous work environments.
- Everyone on the planet must engage with the fashion industry at some level.
- The fashion industry is one of the most wasteful, responsible for 20% of global water waste and 10% of carbon emissions.
- The fashion industry is extremely toxic to people and planet:
  - from the production of the textiles (natural and synthetic)
  - to the dyeing process,
  - to shipping goods from the manufacturers (China and Bangladesh are the world leaders in garment production) to the consumers,
  - to our garments end of life, ending up in landfills and oceans.

*The SDGs are interconnected and the fashion industry impacts all 17, but as an example, consider how the following five SDGs (1, 5, 8, 12 and 13) are connected.*



It is extremely important that the fashion industry, and us as consumers, educate ourselves and change our current practices. Here are a few examples of how the fashion industry impacts specific SDGs:



### SDG1 No Poverty

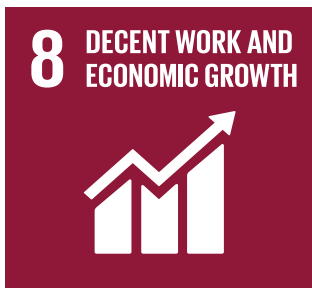
Garment factor worker's wages are extremely low, which leads to poverty (unable to fulfill their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter). The fast fashion model has created unreasonable production targets and extremely low-paying contracts, this results in garment workers being forced to work under- or unpaid overtime. In addition, small-scale farmers, who are responsible for most of the cotton produced worldwide, are underpaid for their crops and struggle in a vicious cycle of poverty.



### SDG5 Gender Equality

Gender discrimination runs rampant in the fashion industry. This includes low wages, sexual harassment and assault, short-term contracts, and pregnancy discrimination. 80% of all garment workers are women, yet most senior positions and positions of power are held by men. Why is it that fashion — which benefits from women's labor, money, and influence — is still largely controlled by men?





### SDG8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

In many industries, but especially in fashion, the wealth disparity between garment workers—predominately women—making clothing and the corporations selling the clothing is shocking. For years, clothing brands have outsourced garment production and manufacturing to countries with weak workers' rights to maintain low costs, but the human cost is high. Garment workers often work in dangerous conditions and face serious consequences for speaking out.



### SDG12 Responsible Consumption and Production

The fashion industry is one of the most extravagant industries when it comes to consumption of natural resources. Both brands producing fashion and customers consuming fashion must acknowledge their roles in causing environmental and human harm. Fashion must take a step back from the oversupply of clothing and rethink the system as we know it.

Consider the rise of social media influencers, fast fashion and micro-trends for some examples of how our consumption patterns have changed.



### SDG13 Climate Action

Textile production generates more greenhouse gas emissions than all international flights and maritime shipping combined. While it is imperative for us as consumers to take make good choices and take proper care of our clothing after purchase, it is also vital for the industry at large to make huge changes to minimize the negative impact on our environment and make it easier for individuals to participate in sustainable fashion.

For a more in-depth look at how each SDG is impacted in the fashion industry, including identifying issues and measures to achieve each goal, explore [Sustainable Development Goals for Textiles and Fashion](#)

The fashion industry is a great example to show how the SDGs are interconnected—you can't solve one goal without impacting others. Depending on you or your students' interests, you can explore fashions' connections to the SDGs through additional activities:

- Have students choose one SDG and research all the ways that goal is affected by the fashion industry. What factors make it easier or more difficult to meet that goal in the fashion industry?
- Challenge students to consider at least one way that each of the 17 goals can be impacted by the fashion industry (consider garment production, processing, shipping, sales and all other aspects). Have each student do their own research or make groups and work together!



## Be a Global Citizen

Our planet is a place of finite resources while a growing population means the needs are continuing to grow. If the global population reaches 9.8 billion by 2050, **the equivalent of almost three planets will be required to provide the natural resources needed to sustain current lifestyles.**

We need to change our consumption habits and shift our energy supplies to more sustainable ones if we are going to reduce our consumption levels.

### How can we be a global citizen?

#### AS A SCHOOL:

- Learn about the responsible consumption in your community by asking:
  - Can people in my community find Fair Trade products? (<https://fairtrade.ca/>)
  - How might a lack of sustainable options for food and other needs affect me or others in my community in the future? How might it affect others around the world?
  - How can our community become more responsible in our consumption?
- Start a social justice or sustainability group in your school to bring attention to the SDGs and work together on these issues
- Organize regular outdoor clean up days
- Implement school-wide composting
- Host collections for household items that required special disposal such as batteries, electronics or for gently used items that can be passed on such as eyeglasses

#### AS AN INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER:

- Buy fewer and better clothes
- Be thoughtful about what you buy – it's especially easy to overbuy now with online shopping.
- Choose the most sustainable option that you can afford. Keep in mind that sustainability looks different to each of us, but if we make the best choice that we can at the time, we will all be better off.
  - Look for the Fairtrade logo when you shop!
  - Research your favourite brands to see what their ethical and environmental practices are.



*Continued next page*



- Reduce your waste (don't forget about food waste!)
- Consider your clothing choices
  - Wear what you have
  - Take care of your clothes. Wash them less and when you do, be sure to follow the wash directions on the tag to keep them looking their best.
  - Shop second-hand when available and appropriate.
  - Repair and mend clothing to extend its lifespan.
  - Pass along gently used clothing to friends or family – giving clothing to someone you know directly is the best first option!

Remember that we hold all the power as consumers. Making informed purchases and buying from sustainable and local sources makes a difference—it puts pressure on other businesses and big brands to adopt sustainable practices that will benefit us all.

*“The most sustainable garment is the one already in your wardrobe.”*  
— ORSOLA DE CASTRO  
CO-FOUNDER OF FASHION REVOLUTION

## Advancements in Sustainable Fashion

It's not all doom and gloom, there are lots of exciting advancements in sustainable fashion to keep an eye on. Some examples include:

- **Alternative and sustainable textiles:** the development of sustainable technologies for fashion and textiles that are recyclable, regenerative, reusable and responsibly sourced are new alternatives.  
Some eco-friendly textile alternatives include recycled fibers and fibers extracted from agricultural waste products such as leaves and rinds. These new textiles offer options that produce less waste during production, are long-wearing, and biodegradable.
- **Closed-loop and sustainable business models** are becoming more popular: the traditional linear model of “take, make, dispose” is being replaced by a circular approach that focuses on reducing waste and extending a garment’s life cycle.
  - Anne Mulaire, a local apparel/manufacturer company, is committed to sustainable and ethical practices (<https://annemulaire.ca/pages/about>) and is B-Corp Certified.
  - France recently introduced a new “repair bonus” to encourage people to repair their clothes—instead of throwing them away—to help fight clothing waste.
  - Mending companies (such as Reclaim Mending), sewing studios (such as Winnipeg Sews) and repair pop-ups (such as Patch Buffets by @ all\_you\_can\_patch on Instagram) can be found all over the province and make caring and repairing for our clothes cool and easy!
- **Fashion Revolution Week**, which takes place each April to coincide with the anniversary of the Rana Plaza factory collapse, is the world’s largest fashion activism movement.
  - Learn more about Fashion Revolution Week 2025 and get involved! <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/north-america/canada/>
- **Local sourcing and production** – some brands are reevaluating their supply chains and looking to support local communities and artisans. These steps work to promote ethical labour practices and contribute to the economic development of regions.  
Near-shoring (see the Glossary) became more popular due to supply chain disruptions during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, but this trend is only expected to increase
- **Conscious consumerism** – people are becoming more mindful of their fashion choices and shifting away from the culture of fast fashion and over-consumerism.



## Take Action!

We hope that you and your students leave here energized and ready to take action! There are countless ways you can bring what you have learned today back to your school and community but if you need a little inspiration, check out some of the ideas below.

Whatever you choose, let us know! We would love to hear what ideas and projects you come up with and if you need some encouragement or support, we can help.

- Watch a documentary on the fashion industry. Some examples include
  - Fashion Reimagined (<https://www.fashionreimaginedfilm.com/>)
  - The True Cost (<https://truecostmovie.com/>)
  - RIVERBLUE (<https://riverbluethemovie.eco/>)
  - The Ugly Truth of Fast Fashion, Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj, Vol. 5
  - ReDress the Future - miniseries (<https://www.deadbeatfilms.co.uk/work/2022/3/25/redress-the-future-trailer>)
- Invite local experts to give a presentation or lead a discussion
- Organize a school wide or grade clothing swap
- Incorporate themes of sustainability into Spirit Weeks or holidays
 

For example make your Halloween costume with pieces you have instead of buying a one-time wear costume
- Organize a sustainable fashion show featuring fair trade items, thrifted items, re-purposed or upcycled items, etc
- Launch an awareness campaign on the impacts of fast fashion
- Host repair days where students learn how to mend small holes and tears, replace buttons, etc
- Become a Fairtrade certified school – contact MCIC to learn how!

### Stay in touch with MCIC!

Did you enjoy playing the Fast Fashion T-shirt board game? Were your students inspired to take action after participating in a Generating Momentum conference? What ideas did they come up with? Do you need any extra support?

Contact us! We want to hear your feedback, suggestions, and ways in which you supported sustainable fashion. Email us at [youth@mcic.ca](mailto:youth@mcic.ca) or tag us on social media!



# Notes and doodles

(this page is for you!)



# Notes and doodles

(this page is for you!)

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## Resources

- You Cannot Call it Beautiful, a spoken word video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldhNZCgmE0s>
- 170 Actions to Transform Our World <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iMdE6DLLuCqwq3K9U-DaTUWB6KyMa8QG/view>
- Global Citizen: Join the movement changing the world <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/>
- The Lazy Person's Guide to Saving the World <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/>
- World's Largest Lesson <https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/>
- The Sustainable Fashion Glossary <https://www.condenast.com/glossary>
- Sustainable Fashion Quiz by EarthDay.org <https://www.earthday.org/sustainable-fashion-quiz/>
- Fashion Revolution Canada and to get their new "Clothing lifecycle classroom poster" (available in French and English) <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/north-america/canada/>
- AQOCI Rana Plaza graphic novel - <https://aqoci.qc.ca/>
- Oxfam's Inclusive Language Guide <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inclusive-language-guide-621487/>

### MCIC

- Lesson plans <https://www.mcic.ca/educators-and-youth/>
- Sign up for our newsletter <https://www.mcic.ca/signup>
- Ideas and support blog <https://takeactionmanitoba.org/>

### OUR FACILITATORS

- Anna-Marie, Reclaim Mending <https://www.reclaimmending.com/>
- Wendy van der Walt, Fabriculous <https://www.fabriculous.com/>
- Green Kids Inc. Theatre for the Planet <https://www.greenkids.com/>

## Glossary - General

**EMPOWERMENT:** An intentional, ongoing process (centered in the local community and involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation), through which individuals and communities increase control over their lives and gain control over factors, resources and decisions that affect them.

### **FAIR TRADE (2 WORDS), FAIRTRADE (1 WORD) AND FAIRLY TRADED - WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE!**

**FAIR TRADE OR FAIRLY TRADED:** A general term that refers to many things including ethical trade, the fair trade movement or fair trade products. Unlike the term organic, "fair trade" is not a protected term so any company can all their products fair trade, even when they're not.

**FAIRTRADE:** This term is only used by organizations, brands and products that are part of the Fairtrade International system and use the blue and green Fairtrade mark. Fairtrade is an evolving global system committed to making a difference for farmer and worker communities around the world. There is a robust certification process that's required before a product earns the Fairtrade label. Fairtrade's mark means producers and businesses have met internationally agreed standards related to price and premiums, labour laws, inspection, and supply chain.

**GLOBAL CITIZEN:** Someone who sees and understands the ways we are all connected and acts responsibly, knowing that everything we do can have an impact on our global community.

**GREENWASHING:** The practice of marketing a company or organisation so they appear more environmentally friendly or more ecological (more natural, healthier, free of chemicals, recyclable, less wasteful of natural resources...) when in practice its activities pollute the environment. Greenwashing is therefore considered abusive or misleading because the company improperly positions itself as more green than it actually is.

**INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:** Writing and thinking to take apart systems of power that maintain poverty, inequality and suffering. This usually means using language preferred by marginalized people, groups and communities, and that respects the way they wish to be referred to.

**INTERSECTIONAL/INTERSECTIONALITY:** Understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles, like race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc. The SDGs are intersectional because global challenges are not simple or straightforward; we must consider multiple ways of looking at these issues.

**SUSTAINABLE:** The ability for something to be maintained or sustain itself. Using what we need to live now without jeopardising future needs. If an activity is sustainable, it should be able to continue forever.

**SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION:** The use of services and products which respond to our basic needs and bring better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Implying more than recycling or donating to charity, it requires profoundly different thought processes and actions.



## Glossary - Fast Fashion T-Shirt board game

**CHILD LABOUR:** Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It is work that (1) is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and/or (2) interferes with a child's schooling. Interfering with schooling means: depriving children of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

**DOWNCYCLE:** A form of recycling where discarded materials or products are converted into items of lower value than the original input. Examples include downcycling textiles into insulation and fillings materials for car, interior and pet industries. - Downcycling is an important component of a "closed-loop" manufacturing system.

**ETHICALLY MADE:** Garment design, production and distribution that focuses on reducing harm to people and planet. In the most ideal sense, it benefits those working along the supply chain and creates a better future for everyone—not just for those at the top. Ethically made clothing is a response to the exploitative practices often associated with the fast fashion industry, where workers are subjected to long hours, low wages and hazardous working conditions.

**FASHION INDUSTRY:** Includes activities, practices and all processes relating to the design, production, communication, selling and servicing of clothing, footwear, accessories, and jewelry with the key components being textiles and leather.

**FASHION REVOLUTION WEEK:** An annual global movement for a fairer, safer, cleaner and more transparent fashion industry. It was founded in 2013 in response to the Rana Plaza disaster.

**FAST FASHION:** A marketing and production method that works to quickly produce large volumes of clothing. In the past, fashion trends were carefully curated and would last years. Overtime, fashion trends became seasonal (think "fall line", "spring line", etc) and today, largely due to social media, fashion trends have become even shorter called "microtrends", lasting only days to weeks. Fast fashion production leverages cheaply made, low-quality materials to bring inexpensive styles to the consumer. These seemingly never-ending, trendy pieces have resulted in an industry-wide movement towards overwhelming amounts of consumption that has hugely harmful impacts on the environment, garment workers and animals.

**GENDER PAY GAP:** The difference between the average earnings of men and women in the workforce. As of 2022, women earn 17% less than men on average. This disparity is even greater for women of colour. In the fashion industry, it is common to find gendered wage segregation, where men typically have jobs with more control and higher wages than women. This happens when employers discriminate (consciously or unconsciously) and therefore, women will find it difficult to be promoted and reach positions with more control and higher pay.

**LIVING WAGE:** The hourly wage a worker needs to earn to cover their basic expenses and participate in their community. A living wage is not the same as the minimum wage (the legislated minimum all employers must pay and is set by each provincial government) and is different for each city. As of 2022, the living wage in Winnipeg is \$18.34, in Thompson it is \$16.25 and in Brandon it is \$15.66. As of October 2023, the minimum wage in Manitoba is \$15.30.

**MICROFIBERS:** When manufactured, washed, and worn, synthetic clothes and textiles shed tiny plastic fibers that end up in the environment. Plastic that ends up in the environment does not biodegrade but fragments into smaller pieces. These tiny pieces, called microfibers, are smaller than 5 mm and usually not visible to the naked eye. Plastic particles washed off from our synthetic clothes and textiles contribute to 35% of primary microplastics polluting our oceans.

**NATURAL FIBERS:** Fibers derived from natural resources such as plants or animal proteins, plant seeds, leaves and stems and even minerals. Natural fibers include cotton, hemp, bamboo, wool and silk. Please note: Being made of natural fibers doesn't automatically mean that it is "good" or that a garment made with natural fibers is sustainable. It is important to recognize that social and environmental impacts of all materials vary depending on where they come from and how they are produced, used and discarded.



**NEAR-SHORING:** The practice of moving parts of the supply chain that were previously off-shored (outsourced to distant, often cheaper, locations) closer to where the end product is actually consumed. For example, the production of clothes designed in Paris and sold predominantly in Europe might be moved from a manufacturer in China to one in Turkey.

**OVERCONSUMPTION:** The process of buying things that a consumer does not truly need. Overconsumption is one of the most significant issues in the contemporary world. Influencers on social media that curate and model trends promote overconsumption-making us believe that we “have to have” any and every product (consider popular “haul” videos). Overconsumption is not just expensive to the consumer, but it is also extremely harmful to the environment and fuels fast fashion.

**SENT OVERSEAS:** When we are finished with our clothes, many of us donate them. We believe that our pre-loved things will “find a good home” but in reality, a large portion of donated clothes are not sold locally. Often, our donated clothes are likely to end up being shipped overseas to resale markets in developing countries, which can negatively impact their local industries and surrounded environment.

- Kantamanto Market in Accra, Ghana, has long been a destination for used clothing from the global secondhand clothing industry. But the amount being imported far exceeds the need or the space. Approximately 15 million garments arrive in the country weekly – most of it in Kantamanto Market – and about 40% of it will end up as waste.

**SLOW FASHION:** An awareness and approach to fashion that carefully considers the processes and resources required to make clothing. Slow fashion advocates for buying better-quality (and fewer) garments that will last longer, and values fair treatment of people, animals, and the planet along the way. This term first emerged in the 2000s to oppose the fast fashion model in which clothes became cheaper and trend cycles sped up.

**SWEATSHOP MADE:** A “sweatshop” is defined as a factory that violates 2 or more labor laws (US Department of Labor). Sweatshops often have poor working conditions, unfair wages, unreasonable hours, child labor and a lack of benefits for workers. Sweatshops produce many of our everyday products such as clothing, toys, shoes and furniture - including products from many designer brands.

**SYNTHETIC FIBERS:** Human-made fibers that rely on heavy use of chemicals, energy and depletion of non-renewable resources. The impacts of each synthetic material depends on where and how they are made. Synthetic fibers are highly popular and usually chosen by the fashion industry because of their availability, durability, resistance, and affordability. Synthetic materials include polyester, nylon, acrylic and Spandex. Polyester is found in over half of all textiles produced today.

**UPCYCLE:** A form of recycling where discarded materials are converted into something of equal or greater value. For example, if leftover material scraps, which were originally destined to be send to landfill or incinerated, were instead rescued, and used to create a backpack. The newly created backpack has more value than the original materials. [Watch this short video by Looptworks](https://youtu.be/OLpMrRaWAFY?si=-qayvE73y7pwZYh) (Nossa Familia Coffee x Looptworks Upcycled Coffee Bags, <https://youtu.be/OLpMrRaWAFY?si=-qayvE73y7pwZYh>).

- Upcycling is an important component of a “closed-loop” manufacturing system.

Explore other related terms in [The Sustainable Fashion Glossary](http://www.condenast.com/glossary/key-elements-of-fashion-and-sustainability/fashion-industry)  
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