

One Good Idea Article

My name is Izzy Reid and I am a Transition Year student. As part of Ms. Lamont's TY green schools module, myself and my friend Jennifer Pearson are participating in SEAI's One Good Idea competition. SEAI hosts a competition every year for primary and post-primary students that encourages students to come up with 'One Good Idea' that encourages energy saving and tackling climate change. For this competition, we are creating an awareness campaign to promote 'Greener Fashion'.

We are hoping to encourage people to buy less from fast fashion companies and more from ethically sourced and second hand shops, and to buy higher quality clothes and take care of them properly. Overall we want people to stop treating the clothes we wear as expendable.

After surveying students in the school, we were shocked to see how little people actually know about the fast fashion industry. We hope to educate people on this topic by giving talks, creating an online presence for our campaign, designing and putting up posters and organising a style swap and other events. We also hope to reach a bigger audience by promoting our message around the town.

So what is fast fashion?

Fast fashion is when processes are sped up to get new trends into shops as quickly as possible.

Fast fashion is one of the most polluting industries in the world. More pesticides and insecticides are used for cotton than any other crop. The production of cotton also leads to the emission of greenhouse gases such as CO₂ and nitrous oxide, a gas over 300 times more potent than CO₂. Toxic chemicals such as chromium and formaldehyde are used in leather production, which often leach into waterways. Synthetic clothes are the biggest source of microplastic in the oceans.

Fast fashion not only has a negative impact on the environment but on the people involved in clothes production too. People working in textile factories are subject to long working hours in dangerous conditions with little pay and no insurance. Child labour is also a huge concern. A study in India showed that over 60% of textile workers are under the age of 18.

This is a topic we are both very passionate about so taking part in this competition is a great opportunity for us to showcase our interest and get people involved. Fast fashion is something that affects us all yet there is little awareness about it. It is an

extremely important topic that needs to be talked about and we plan to continue spreading our message after the competition.

Participating in One Good Idea has been a really valuable experience. It has inspired us both so much and we will continue to fight for change until there is justice.

Fast fashion is extremely consumer oriented. If we as consumers realise the power we have, I think it is possible to make a change. Hopefully our campaign will inspire people to take action. People need to realise that every individual has a responsibility in caring for the environment. If everyone does one small thing to help, like buying second hand or upcycling clothes, it has a huge effect. So think again when throwing away old clothes or buying new ones. Think of the farmers who grow it, the sweatshop labourers who sew it, the rivers and seas polluted by the toxic chemicals, and the atmosphere being destroyed by the excess of carbon being pumped out.