



LA SILLA ROJA
A journey toward justice



Friends of
Fe y Alegría
in the United States



La Silla Roja calls us to see the connections between the right to education and care for the environment.

The purpose of this unit is to offer students the opportunity to explore how our current consumption and lifestyles affect the environment and explore alternatives and daily habits that contribute to protecting the Earth.

ACTIVITY



- 1) **Learn** about the irreversible damages our way of producing and consuming causes to the environment.
- 2) **Inspire** personal engagement; as consumers and citizens we have to fight for a more sustainable and habitable world.
- 3) **Act** by encouraging students to identify and share daily habits to protect the environment.



Time required

60 minutes



Instructions

Let's take a look at the photo above. What do we see?

Let's start by explaining that today we celebrate Earth Day. What do students think the current situation of the environment is? Do you think our lifestyle and consumption affect nature?

Discuss with students about the perspectives which claim that, if we maintain our current rhythm of consumption, in 2050 we will need three planets to maintain our lifestyle. Irresponsibility and excessive use of our natural resources are already forcing many people to move because of supply shortages and natural disasters.

Next, invite students to read the extract from the following news story:

3 YEARS AFTER A DEVASTATING FACTORY COLLAPSE, MILLIONS OF GARMENT WORKERS REMAIN AT RISK

A new report reveals that reforms following the deadly Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh have left millions of workers – mostly women – still in danger.

Three years ago this week, the fashion industry experienced the deadliest accident in its history: the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh that killed more than 1,100 workers on April 24, 2013.

The enormity and visibility of the Rana Plaza catastrophe – graphic images showing bodies being pulled from the rubble were immediately beamed around the world – shocked the world and the industry into action. In the wake of the disaster more than 200 fashion companies including Adidas, Gap, H&M, Target, and Walmart quickly pledged \$100 million through two efforts to increase inspections, enforce standards, and pay for safety upgrades.

But the pledge taken by those major brands affects only about a third of Bangladeshi factories – those contracted directly by the major clothing brands – leaving some 5,000 sub-contracting factories and 3 million garment workers without strict oversight or safety improvements, according to a report from a research team at New York University.

Divide the class into three groups. Each group will be a commission investigating the case:

The first group will investigate the [social implications](#) that the massive consumption of clothing has:

- What relationship is there between the price of clothing and our consumption capacity? What relationship is there between the price of clothing and the labor conditions of the people making our clothes? What effects do labor conditions have on the people that make our clothes?
- What are the consequences for the production in our country when there are other places in the world where production is cheaper? Is there a human cost to this dynamic?
- What contrast do we find between what we desire and what we need? Which should we follow to be happy? Why?
- What alternatives to this model could we come up with?

The second group will investigate the [environmental implications](#) that the massive consumption of clothing has:

- The vast majority of the clothing that we use is made of cotton. What treatment do cotton crops undergo? What effects does this have on the Earth?
- How much water is needed to make clothing? What effects do the dyes and whitening of clothing have on the environment? What is done with the waste produced?
- What repercussions does massive consumption have over the use of natural resources?
- What contrast do we find between what we desire and what we need? Which should we follow to be happy? Why?
- What alternatives to this model could we come up with?

The third group will investigate the [implications that the massive consumption of clothing has on us all](#):

- What effects does the advertising industry have on the consumption of clothing? Does this correspond with a real necessity?
- What are the consequences of not being able to buy fashionable clothes (because of a lack of economic resources, lack of appropriate sizes, etc.)? How do we feel when we don't have access to this way of consumption?
- What contrast do we find between what we desire and what we need? Which should we follow to be happy? Why?
- What alternatives to this model could we come up with?



To end this lesson plan, invite each of the three groups to share what they have researched with the entire class, thus generating a space of dialogue that focuses on how guidelines of consumption affect the satisfaction of our necessities and also the fulfillment of rights.

A WORLD OF ALTERNATIVES TO CHANGE THE WORLD, WHERE DO WE START?

What if, in 2050, we all had to move from Earth to another planet? What would you feel? What would have provoked this situation? Imagine that you have the chance to send a message to the youth who lived on Earth before its devastation about the measures that should be taken to protect it from this future. What would you say?

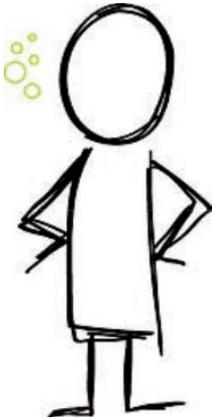
Invite students to write down their messages, read them out loud and finally post them to a mural under the title “[Seeds for a better world](#)”. Once the messages are ready, reflect together on the fact that while we haven't yet reached 2050, there is still the opportunity to react.

Encourage students to turn those messages into daily habits to protect the environment. To do so, they can create a table with the message, the specific activity they wish to do and some basic information (who, when and where) that will help them to reflect on their engagement and commitment to implement those actions.

They can share this commitment on social media and encourage their friends and family to join them, thus spreading [seeds for a better world](#).



"Mini Me"



Take some time at the end of the activity to fill out the "Mini me" handout found in the introduction. Write down what you have learned, feelings that you experienced, and an individual or group action that you will commit to once the activity has been completed.



Resources

- Healing Earth (www.healingearth.ijep.net/)
- Ignatian Carbon Challenge (www.ignatiansolidarity.net/ignatian-carbon-challenge/)
- Laudato Si', On Care for our Common Home: (<http://ow.ly/Utv130dG6GJ>)
- Understanding Sustainable Living: (<http://ow.ly/IEpJ30dG6IN>)

Thank you for taking the time to use this resource with your students. You are contributing to shaping holistic and committed citizens of tomorrow's global world. For more information, please visit www.feyalegria.us/our-work/global-education

