FASHION COUNCIL GERMANY

Impact Report

From Access to Agency

Generation Zukunft

Fashion Zukunft

2019 2026

“What I am taking into everyday life is to look after my clothes and buy only what I really need—not something I will wear tomorrow and then never again. I also want to upcycle older clothes and transform them if I no longer like them.”

Johannes,15, *pupil*

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Foreword

Looking back on the years in which we have implemented our two educational initiatives to date — from our first Fashion Zukunft conference with The King's Foundation in 2019 to the launch of Generation Zukunft in 2022 — I cannot help but think of one particular encounter.

A young pupil who had never sat at a sewing machine before took part in one of our workshops and showed our Chairwoman, Christiane Arp, a pair of trousers that did not fit him properly. He asked her for advice on how he could alter the garment and adapt it to his own ideas, asking question after question and patiently listening to her answers. Just a few days later, he proudly wore his redesigned trousers to the next project session – telling us with a big smile that he was now considering becoming a tailor himself.

That day, in that moment on the sidelines of a workshop, I was reminded once again of what Fashion Zukunft and Generation Zukunft can achieve: young people begin to see fashion not merely as a product to be purchased, but as a skill, an opportunity and a means of self-determination.

This is precisely why the knowledge we share through our two initiatives — practical knowledge on the one hand and theoretical knowledge on the other — is so important: Through Fashion Zukunft and Generation Zukunft, young people can discover the wide range of career opportunities the fashion industry has to offer. From craftsmanship and production to communication and technology, as well as sustainability, there are many different paths into the industry.

At the same time, hands-on engagement with materials, craftsmanship and the lifespan of a garment can encourage more conscious consumption. Our experience shows that encounters like these can change the questions young people ask and thus the decisions they make.

The key insight gained over the first years of our educational initiatives, Fashion Zukunft and Generation Zukunft, respectively, is this: the future of fashion begins long before young people enter the industry — it begins in the classroom.

As Fashion Council Germany, we did not arrive at this insight alone. We share it with our project partner, The King's Foundation, which initially inspired the collaboration. At the time, our focus was already on supporting emerging designers and fashion labels. However, our perspective broadened through our work with The King's Foundation: How does the next generation understand fashion? How does it consume it? And how aware is it of the social and environmental impact of its choices?

These questions shaped the development of Fashion Zukunft and, subsequently, Generation Zukunft, which we launched together with the PVH Foundation in 2022 with the aim of giving young people access to fashion education from an early age.

Many important support programmes — both our own and those run by other institutions — focus on university students or aspiring entrepreneurs. Together with our partners we also wanted to reach younger audiences, particularly those who have had few opportunities to engage with fashion beyond consumption. This includes young people in structurally disadvantaged regions and those facing challenging social circumstances. Every young person should have the opportunity to explore fashion as a potential career path and to contribute ideas on how an industry in need of transformation can become more sustainable and future-ready.

At the same time, we must be clear about where responsibility lies: we cannot expect the next generation to solve the challenges of an industry it did not create. Awareness is a starting point, but it cannot replace concrete action. Companies must share their knowledge and open up their workplaces to young people; educational institutions must create spaces for creative, hands-on learning; policymakers must recognise the importance of fashion, textiles and craftsmanship in education.

With this report, which traces the development of Fashion Zukunft and Generation Zukunft and brings together experiences and findings from the 2025 residency and conference, we want to encourage a dialogue that extends beyond individual workshops and events.

By documenting our experiences and making them accessible to a wider audience, we hope to foster exchange between young people, industry representatives and policymakers — and help turn that dialogue into lasting change.

The feedback we have received so far — from pupils taking part in wour workshops and conferences, from our partners The King's Foundation and the PVH Foundation, and from industry representatives who are following our projects with great interest — reinforces our determination to continue on this path. Young people are curious, engaged and willing to question their relationship with fashion when given the opportunity.

The future of fashion does not begin when the next generation enters the industry — it begins by giving them the opportunity to understand fashion, question it critically and imagine how it could be different.

Scott Lipinski
CEO, Fashion Council Germany

From Access to Agency

Generation Zukunft broadens access to fashion education. The Fashion Zukunft conference and residency extend this learning through practical experience, exchange and professional encounters.

Fashion shapes how young people consume, communicate identity and imagine their futures. Yet access to knowledge about the systems behind clothing — its environmental costs, labour conditions, cultural meanings and professional pathways — remains uneven. Since 2022, Generation Zukunft responds to this gap by bringing fashion education into schools and additional youth settings across Germany. The programme combines classroom workshops, digital learning, certification and a supported international educational residency.

Additionally, the Fashion Zukunft Conference was established in 2019 by Fashion Council Germany in partnership with The King's Foundation. It provides an interdisciplinary, cross-border setting in which pupils from Germany and Scotland can exchange perspectives and deepen their learning. Since the first Generation Zukunft residency in 2023, participating pupils have met designers, educators, craftspeople and industry experts at Dumfries House, the headquarters of The King's Foundation in Scotland. Alongside discussions about sustainability, participants can test practices of repair, making and material transformation themselves.

This report traces the initiatives' development and reach from 2019 to 2026. Its detailed outcome analysis centres on the 2025 educational residency and conference because this edition provides the most comprehensive combination of quantitative and qualitative participant data available for the report. Earlier editions included voluntary assessments and feedback, but the supplied documentation does not provide sufficiently complete and comparable item-level data to establish a historical outcome baseline. The 2025 evidence points to three central outcomes: First, participants developed a broader understanding of fashion as an environmental, social, political and cultural system. Second, hands-on learning strengthened practical skills and creative self-efficacy. Third, the international group experience supported confidence, belonging and access to professional conversations that can otherwise feel distant.

The findings reveal a continuing tension between attitudes and consumption practices. Participants placed considerable value on sustainability and fairness, while style, appearance and social media content continued to influence their purchasing priorities. The programme's contribution therefore lies not in producing a simple conversion from unsustainable to sustainable behaviour. It creates the conditions for more informed choices, practical experimentation and a stronger sense that young people can participate in change

Impact at a Glance



"It is important to show younger generations that clothes should not be made to be worn just once, but can be sustainable and long-lasting."

Janis, *pupil*

Programme scale and access (2022–2026)

Programme-wide reach is paired with evidence of learning from the voluntary assessments completed after school workshops.

11,200 +

reported young people reached through school-based activities and Hubs

100

reported school engagements across Germany

150

participants reached through Generation Zukunft Hubs

144

pupils participated in Scotland residencies between 2023 and 2026

Learning outcomes from voluntary assessments (2025–2026)

545

pupils completed the voluntary assessment

80,4%

identified social and labour issues

82,4%

demonstrated environmental-impact knowledge

81,8%

identified sustainable fashion practices

Feedback assessment after school workshops (2025–2026)

85,3 %

of pupils reported that they gained greater awareness and understanding of fashion

85,8 %

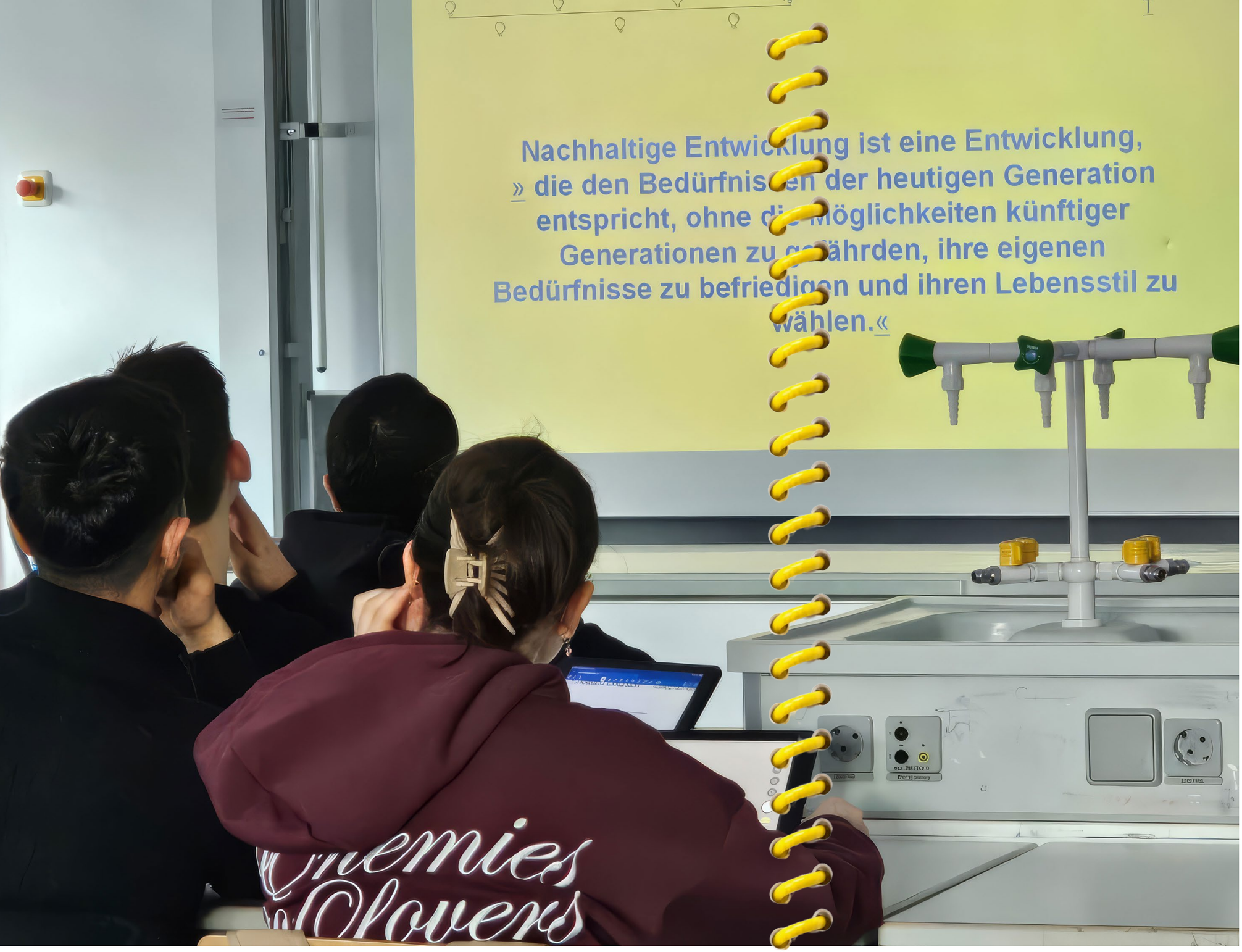
reported that they pay more attention to their clothing choices and their environmental impact

80,5 %

reported they have learned things about the fashion industry that they did not know before

87,9 %

reported that they would highly recommend Generation Zukunft



"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Learning-outcome and feedback analysis is based on voluntary assessments from editions 3 and 4. Earlier assessments were excluded because the test and scoring framework became methodologically comparable from edition 3 onwards. Response bases for feedback indicators vary according to question completion.

Why Equal Access to Fashion Education Matters

Fashion is part of young people's everyday lives, but access to the knowledge, experiences and professional networks needed to understand or enter the sector remains uneven.

For many young people, fashion is one of the most immediate ways in which global systems become personally visible. A garment connects raw materials, industrial production and logistics with marketing, media, working conditions and waste. Clothing also plays a role in how young people express identity, negotiate belonging and encounter social or cultural norms. Yet familiarity with fashion does not necessarily mean understanding the processes behind it.

Fashion education gives young people the opportunity to examine whose labour and resources go into clothing, how trends and images influence what is valued, and what alternatives exist in the way garments are made and used. It helps them assess claims about sustainability and connects critical discussion with practical experience, such as working with materials or extending the life of clothing. Encounters with professionals can also make careers visible that pupils may not previously have considered. Fashion thus becomes a subject through which young people can develop informed judgments and explore their own possibilities for taking part in the sector.

These opportunities are not equally available. Access to creative education, career information, professional contacts and international experiences can depend on where a young person lives, which school they attend and which financial or social resources are available to them. Reaching pupils in schools and supporting their participation beyond the classroom helps make these experiences available to young people who might otherwise have limited access to them.

Fashion Council Germany approaches this through two connected initiatives. Established in 2019 with The King's Foundation, **Fashion Zukunft** brings young pupils from Germany and Scotland into an international conversation with educators, craftspeople and fashion professionals. **Generation Zukunft**, developed in 2022 with support from The PVH Foundation, provides school-based learning and a route into these encounters. Together, the initiatives link an understanding of fashion's social and environmental dimensions with practical experience and participation in discussions about its future.

Their shared premise is that a more sustainable and inclusive fashion sector also depends on who can access the knowledge, skills and professional spaces through which it is shaped.

1.1 Who the Programme Is Designed to Reach

Generation Zukunft addresses pupils aged 14 to 17, when questions about further education and work begin to take shape. Its equity priority is to reach young people facing socioeconomic disadvantage and those from groups underrepresented in the fashion industry. Access to fashion careers is shaped by barriers that can overlap: financial resources, where a young person lives and proximity to industry networks. Financial security can make courses, travel and early experience possible. Industry contacts can provide guidance, introductions and informal knowledge of the jobs available and the routes into them. Young people whose families work in other fields may have fewer opportunities to acquire this knowledge, however supportive their families are. An intersectional approach is therefore needed to understand how these barriers can reinforce one another and make a career in fashion harder to envisage or pursue.

To reach these young people, the programme works with secondary schools, particularly comprehensive and integrated schools, and gives attention to settings with fewer established routes into creative education and industry networks. For edition 1, Fashion Council Germany assessed prospective partner schools through a programme-relevance framework. This considered the diversity and inclusion profile of schools and their local contexts, existing creative education and career guidance, intercultural competence and engagement with sustainability. School certifications, demographic information and local educational and community provision also informed the assessment. The aim was to identify settings where additional opportunities could be particularly valuable.

Selecting partner schools puts this equity priority into practice without asking individual pupils to disclose or prove personal hardship. It cannot establish every participant's circumstances, but it helps direct opportunities towards school communities where access to creative education and industry knowledge may be more limited.



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The Joint Educational Pathway

1 Education at Schools

The pathway begins with school visits and classroom workshops delivered through **Generation Zukunft**. Depending on the programme edition and the school's capacity, pupils take part in three to five sessions.

2 Digital Education

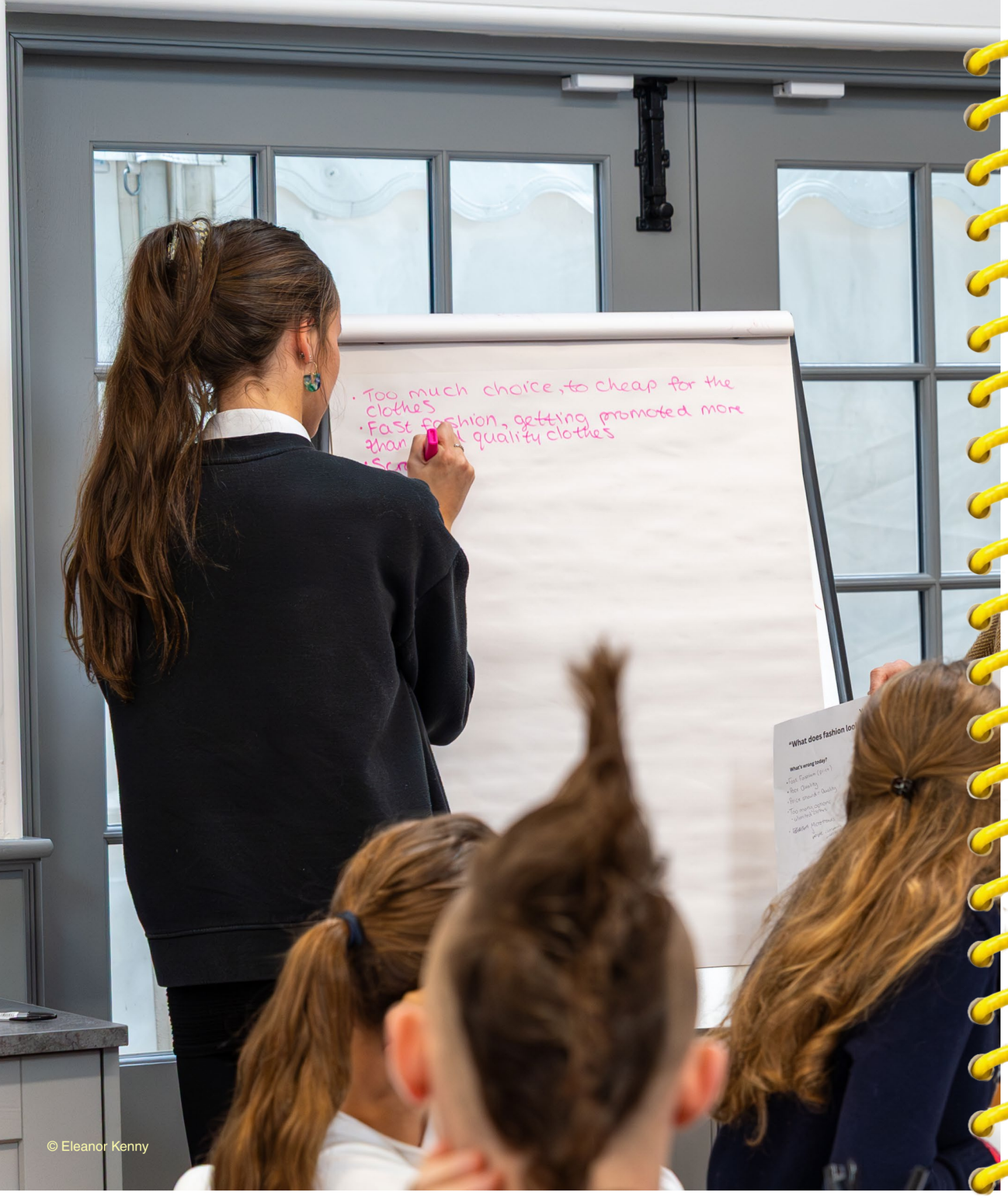
Expert-led webinars and the bilingual Fashion & Impact e-learning series extend the workshop content. Expert led webinars allow young people and educators to deepen their knowledge and gain first hand industry insights.

3 Certification and Application

After completing the workshops and webinars, pupils can complete a voluntary assessment to consolidate their learning and receive a certificate that can support future applications. Those wishing to take part in the residency can also submit a letter of motivation. Knowledge and motivation both inform progression to the next stage.

4 Dumfries House Fashion Education Residency & Fashion Zukunft Conference

Selected pupils take part in the Fashion Education Residency at Dumfries House and attend the **Fashion Zukunft** conference. This stage connects the preparation provided through **Generation Zukunft** with practical activity, international exchange and participation in a professional forum.



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1.2 Objectives of the Joint Educational Pathway

- provide accessible knowledge about the fashion and textile industry and its environmental, social and cultural dimensions
- support critical reflection on consumption, media influences, representation and working conditions
- introduce practical ways of caring for, repairing and transforming clothing while strengthening appreciation for materials and sustainable craftmanship
- widen access to information about creative careers and to encounters with people working across the fashion sector
- create opportunities for young people to contribute their questions and perspectives within professional and international
- strengthen young people's confidence and agency through cultural exchange and collaboration with peers from different regions and countries

Generation Zukunft: Building the Knowledge Base

The current **Generation Zukunft** curriculum consists of five workshop modules: Sustainability in Fashion, Social Responsibility, Career Opportunities, Psychology of Fashion and Diversity & Inclusion in Fashion. Across these modules, six connected themes organise the programme's educational content. They are not separate lessons but recurring perspectives through which pupils examine fashion.

Environmental Impact: Pupils follow the journey of a garment from fibre cultivation and dyeing to production, use and disposal. They examine the effects of water and chemical use, energy consumption, overproduction, synthetic fibres and textile waste.

Social Meaning of Fashion: Clothing can communicate identity, belonging and social status. Pupils discuss how dress codes, trends and fashion imagery shape how people see themselves and others. They also consider fashion's role in subcultures and self-expression.

Diversity and Inclusion: This theme considers visibility, body norms and access within fashion. Pupils examine whose bodies, identities and experiences are represented in fashion images and design, as well as forms of exclusion connected to sizing, accessibility and working practices.

Value of Fashion: Pupils explore the labour, materials and skills involved in making clothing. By tracing supply chains, they consider the relationship between price, quality and working conditions and develop a greater appreciation of the human and material resources embodied in garments.

Sustainable Mindset: The programme introduces ways of extending the life of clothing through care, repair, sharing, resale and upcycling. Pupils also learn about circular approaches and consider how design and business models can reduce material consumption.

Responsibility and Consumption: Pupils examine how advertising, social media and peer groups influence shopping habits. They consider the responsibilities of consumers alongside those of brands, industry actors and policymakers, avoiding the implication that individuals alone can resolve systemic problems.

Fashion Zukunft: Extending Learning through Participation

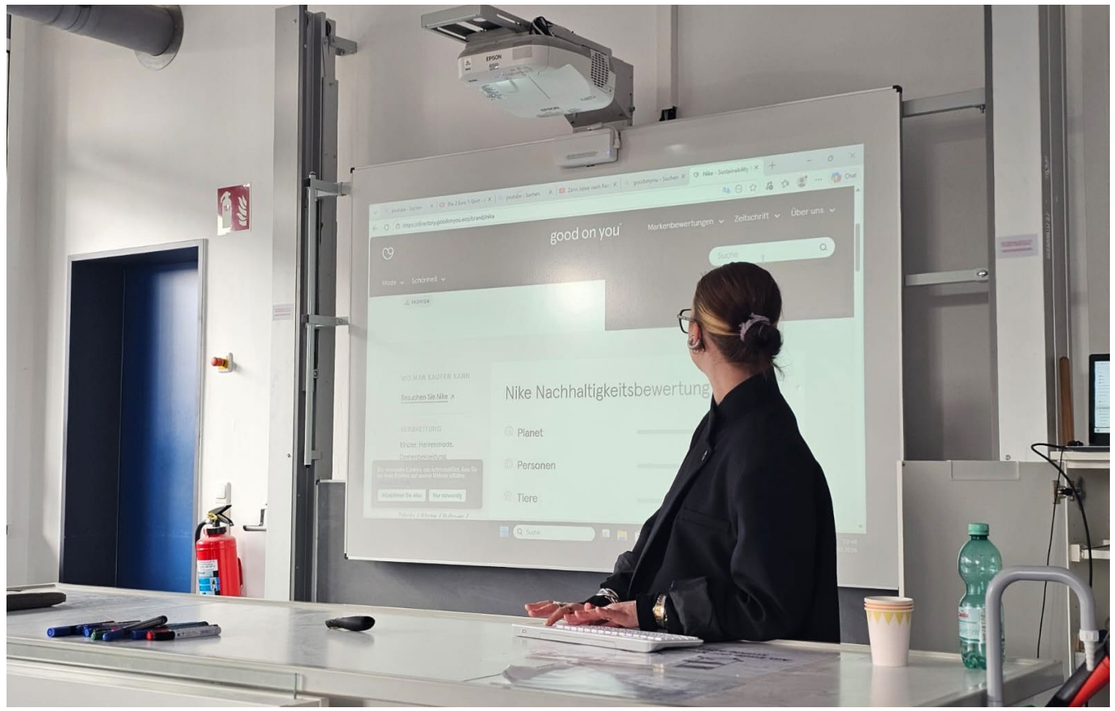
Within the joint pathway, **Fashion Zukunft** carries the school-based learning into an international industry setting. Panels and talks introduce current professional debates, while roundtables and practical activities give young participants opportunities to respond from their own experiences. Pupils can raise questions directly with speakers and observe how environmental, social and cultural concerns are negotiated within professional practice.

On the conference day the German pupils are joined by pupils from Scotland that also participate in the conference programme. Their involvement extends the professional encounter into a cross-border educational exchange in which the German and Scottish groups can compare perspectives and work together. In this setting, pupils experience themselves as participants in discussions about the future of fashion rather than only as recipients of information.



"At first, I felt overwhelmed by the scale of the place. By the second day, however, I had developed a real sense of the subject and felt completely immersed in thinking about sustainability and fashion. I had not realised before what a vast field it is."

Millie, *pupil*



1.3 Creating Accessible Participation

Access depends on more than whether a programme is formally available. It is also shaped by where learning takes place, what participation costs, whether young people already have access to relevant information and networks, and which forms of support are provided. Differences in how pupils engage with learning can create further barriers. These considerations are embedded across the pathway.

Access through Place

Locating the workshops within schools brings specialist knowledge into an environment pupils already use. It allows young people to encounter fashion as an educational subject without first needing to seek out a specialist extracurricular offer.

Access through Cost Support

The programme covers travel expenses from Berlin, accommodation at Dumfries House and all programme activities in Scotland. This support removes most of the direct costs associated with the international educational experience. Participants remain responsible for travelling to Berlin and obtaining the required travel authorisation or visa. Programme accounts indicate that, for some pupils, the journey to Scotland was their first flight. Others had rarely travelled outside their home region, and almost none had previously visited Scotland. Covering the principal travel, accommodation and programme costs therefore lowers the financial barrier to an international experience that would otherwise require considerable resources.

Access through Accompaniment

Teachers accompanying the group provide educational and personal support throughout the residency. Their presence supports pupils as they travel internationally and join a cohort composed of participants from different schools and regions, many of whom had not met before departure. Travelling together gives pupils an opportunity to meet informally before the programme at Dumfries House begins. This can reduce uncertainty and help create an initial sense of community. Over the days of the residency, shared workshops and excursions strengthen these connections further.

Access through Different Forms of Learning

The pathway combines discussion, visual materials, digital exercises, practical making and informal encounters with professionals. Pupils can therefore engage through different forms of learning, and participation is not defined by written or academic performance alone.

Access to Professional Spaces

Through **Fashion Zukunft**, pupils enter an international conference environment without needing existing contacts in the fashion industry. The supported group setting and the participatory conference formats make it possible to observe professional discussions, approach speakers and contribute questions. Access therefore includes the opportunity to take part in spaces where the future of the sector is being discussed.

Stages of Impact

Access

Programme contribution: school workshops, Hubs, digital modules and financial and organisational support for the residency; expected outcome: More young people can encounter fashion education and professional perspectives.

Understanding

Programme contribution: the **Generation Zukunft** curriculum, expert input and critical media literacy; expected outcome: Pupils connect clothing with resources, labour, representation, identity and politics.

Application

Programme contribution: practical activities during the residency and **Fashion Zukunft** formats; expected outcome: Sustainability becomes tangible; pupils develop skills and appreciation for craft.

Agency

Programme contribution: creative choice, practical alternatives and career encounters; expected outcome: Participants recognise options for action and imagine themselves as makers or professionals.

Participation

Programme contribution: roundtables, reflection walls, questions and international exchange; expected outcome: Young people experience their views as relevant within professional conversations.

Long-term impact

Programme contribution: a foundation for continued learning, practical engagement and professional connections; expected outcome: Sustained changes in behaviour, educational progression and more equitable participation in the sector.

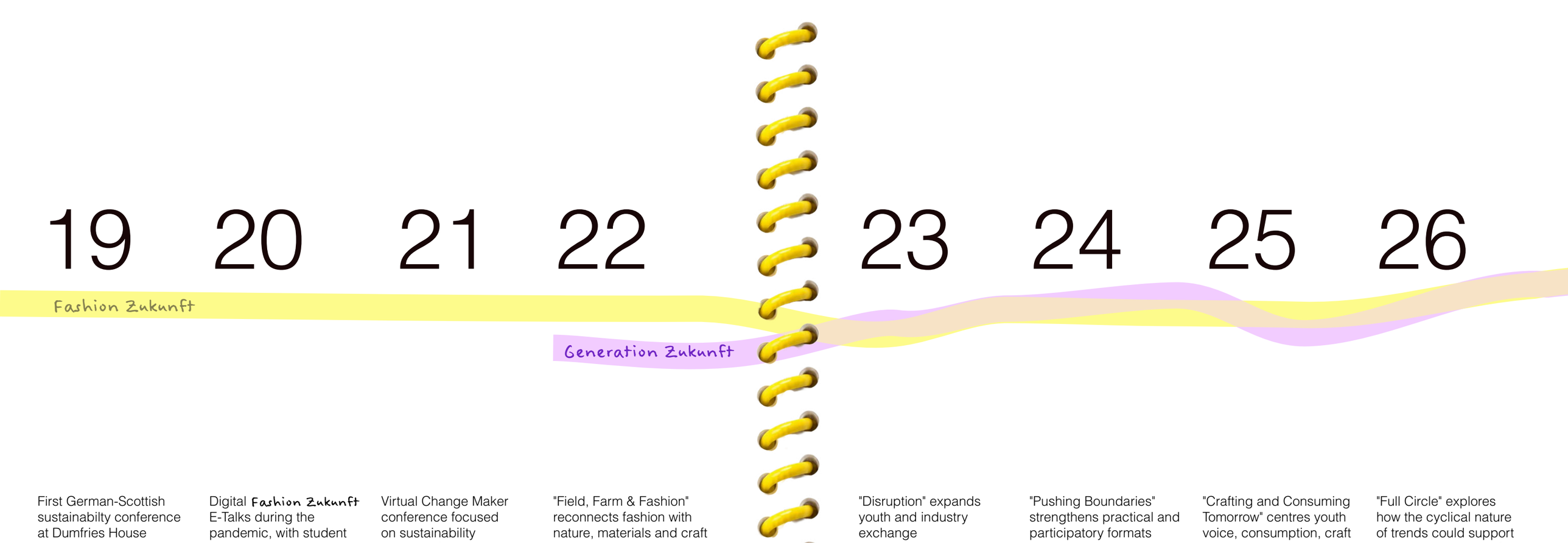


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How The Initiatives Evolved

Scheku, *teacher at Helios School*

"My highlight was seeing the pupils' eyes light up when they presented the pieces they had created during the eBay Upcycling Workshop."


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Fashion Zukunft
Generation Zukunft
First German-Scottish sustainabilty conference at Dumfries House
Digital Fashion Zukunft E-Talks during the pandemic, with student breakout discussions
Virtual Change Maker conference focused on sustainability and slow fashion
"Field, Farm & Fashion" reconnects fashion with nature, materials and craft
"Disruption" expands youth and industry exchange
"Pushing Boundaries" strengthens practical and participatory formats
"Crafting and Consuming Tomorrow" centres youth voice, consumption, craft and social dimensions
"Full Circle" explores how the cyclical nature of trends could support more circular ways of engaging with fashion — through reuse, resale, repair, upcycling and the rediscovery of existing garments
Edition 1 approved in May, followed by curriculum development and webinar production. No Generation Zukunft residency takes place in calendar year 2022.
First school workshops run from January to May, followed by the first residency in October. Twenty-four Generation Zukunft pupils attend the conference, creating the first documented operational connection between the initiatives.
Edition 2 reaches 23 schools and 75 classes. Twenty-four pupils complete the second residency and participate in the conference.
Edition 3 of Generation Zukunft reaches 30 schools and approximately 3,400 pupils, adds hubs for a further 150 participants and expands the reported residency cohort.
Edition 4 expands access through the bilingual Fashion & Impact e-learning programme, while 48 selected pupils prepare for the November residency and conference.

2.1 Fashion Zukunft Conference

The Fashion Zukunft conference is an annual interdisciplinary summit established in 2019 on fashion, sustainability, education, and cultural exchange, organised by Fashion Council Germany in partnership with The King's Foundation, the charitable foundation established by His Majesty King Charles III. Hosted at Dumfries House Scotland, the conference was created as a platform to foster sustainable fashion innovation, intergenerational dialogue, craft preservation, education, youth engagement, and UK–German cultural exchange. In an interview with the Foundation's Executive Director for Education Jacqueline Farrell - Foundation, published in January 2026, she explained that international exchange has always been central to the organisation's mission. Rather than limiting their work on craftsmanship to their headquarters, they place great importance on collaboration and knowledge-sharing across borders. Through these international partnerships, the idea emerged to organise a joint conference between The King's Foundation and Fashion Council Germany that would bring together industry professionals from both the UK and Germany to discuss current issues and shared challenges facing the sector. As planning progressed, the concept was expanded to include young people aged 14 to 17, recognising the importance of engaging the next generation who will eventually follow in the footsteps of today's craftspeople and industry leaders. This vision led to the launch of the first Fashion Zukunft conference in 2019. Over the years, the conference has developed beyond its initial focus on sustainability and now serves as an educational and industry forum that brings young people into conversation with designers, educators, activists, brands, policymakers and cultural institutions around themes that vary from one edition to the next.

2019

German-Scottish Sustain Conference

The first edition was primarily industry-focused. It combined a networking dinner with workshops at Dumfries House, including natural dyeing, Business Readiness, Brand Value & Sustainability and Virtual Design & Product Development. Panel discussions addressed the challenges facing fashion businesses in 2020, the risks and opportunities of a sustainable approach and the process of starting a fashion brand. German Sustain Concept brands including OFT, Lara Krude, Phylyda and Working Title presented designs; the programme also included manufacturer visits and a reception with His Majesty King Charles III.

2020-2021

Digital Exchange

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Fashion Zukunft moved online. The 2020 E-Talks brought together around 80 participants from Germany and Scotland for discussions on circular fashion, textile innovation and the future of the industry. The panel talks were moderated by Fashion Council Germany's chairwoman Christiane Arp and journalist Inga Griese and features the participating brands Christopher Kane, Erdem, ODEEH, Vin + Omi, and CRUBA. The conference opened with a special message from His Majesty King Charles III, welcoming all participants and emphasising the importance of international collaboration and innovation within the fashion industry. After the panels, students exchanged their own views in guided breakout sessions. The virtual Change Maker conference in 2021 continued the focus on student engagement, sustainability and slow fashion.

2022

"Field, Farm & Fashion"

The 2022 conference edition took place in partnership with The King's Foundation and in cooperation with UK-German Connection in Dumfries House. It was held under the motto "Field, Farm and Fashion" and welcomed around 100 participants from Germany and the UK. The event focused on reconnecting fashion to nature, exploring material origins, regenerative production, and traditional textile knowledge. The conference topics, showcased in panel talks, workshops and guest lectures from industry experts such as designer Esther Perbandt or plus-size fashion stylist Michaela Leitz-Aslaksen covered a variety of topics such as: "between fashion and nature", "identity and self-expression through clothing", "second-hand fashion", "AI in fashion design", and the "reinvention of tradition". Around 100 participants from Germany and the UK attended the conference, which strongly encouraged cross-generational learning. Twenty German and twenty British students were selected from hundreds of applicants to participate in workshops exploring textile processing and sustainable material production. This first edition positioned the conference not only as an educational initiative and sustainability platform, but also as a symbolic bridge between heritage and innovation. The ceremonial planting of participants' pledges at Dumfries House reflected the conference's long-term ecological vision. The highlight was meeting His Majesty King Charles III to discuss the initiative and goals.

2023

"Disruption"

The 2023 edition marked a major expansion in ambition and industry relevance. Under the theme "Disruption", the conference shifted from primarily discussing sustainability to actively questioning and challenging existing fashion systems. Participation grew to more than 100 attendees, and the structure evolved into dedicated youth and industry sessions, allowing for more targeted discussions and engagement. New collaborations with eBay Germany, the PVH Foundation, and TENCEL™ broadened the conference's reach and visibility. 24 German students from the Generation Zukunft initiative were selected to participate in the conference as well as the 6 designers from the FCG initiative Fashion X Craft making the conference day into a central meeting point for intercultural exchange. Panels focused on material innovation, changing perceptions of fashion, circularity, sustainable business models, and fashion activism. The speaker lineup also became considerably more influential, featuring figures such as Amy Powney, Dilys Williams, and representatives from British Vogue and Fashion Roundtable. Overall, the atmospheree of the conference became more critical, activist-oriented, and reform-driven.

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How should fashion be consumed & experienced by future generations?

2.2 Generation Zukunft

2022-2023

Edition 1: Foundation and First Rollout

The first project period ran from 9 May 2022 to 9 May 2023. Fashion Council Germany developed the curriculum between May and December 2022, before delivering it in schools from January to May 2023. The initial curriculum comprised three core lessons on sustainability, social responsibility and career opportunities in fashion and textiles. Five expert-led webinars complemented the lessons, with contributors including designer Sydney Emeka Nwakanma, founder Sema Gedik and stylist Dogukan Nesanir. Edition 1 reached 17 schools and 55 classes, generating approximately 2,000 recorded pupil contacts. A voluntary assessment and certification pathway was also introduced, giving pupils an opportunity to consolidate their learning and apply for the international residency. The first residency associated with the programme took place in October 2023, following the school-based phase. 24 pupils travelled to Dumfries House, where they participated in the "Disruption" edition of the Fashion Zukunft Conference.

2023-2024

Edition 2: Content Deepening

Edition 2 ran from 1 September 2023 to 1 November 2024. During this period, the programme reached 23 schools and 75 classes, with approximately 2,800 recorded pupil contacts. Feedback from edition 1 informed the development of two additional lessons: “Psychology of Fashion and Diversity & Inclusion in Fashion”. Developed and revised between November 2023 and January 2024, the expanded curriculum allowed schools to select between three and five sessions. Workshops and expert-led webinars continued throughout 2024. Among those who completed the assessment in edition 2, 81 percent achieved the certificate, providing them with a formal record of their participation. 24 pupils subsequently joined the second Scotland residency during the 2024 autumn term and participated in the “PUSHING Boundaries” edition of the conference.

2024-2025

Edition 3: Scaling and Diversification

Edition 3 ran from 1 October 2024 to 8 November 2025. Between January and September 2025, the programme delivered workshops at 30 schools and recorded approximately 3,400 pupil contacts through its school-based activities. The Generation Zukunft Hubs were introduced between March and August 2025 to reach young people whose schools were unable to host the programme. Delivered in collaboration with Das Werk, Platte Berlin, Jasmien Wynants, Fabric Hamburg and kreHtiv Hannover, the Hubs combined elements of the curriculum with textile printing, hand stitching, upcycling and professional exchange. They reached a further 150 participants. The residency also expanded from 24 to 48 pupils in edition 3. The group travelled to Scotland in November 2025 and took part in the “Crafting & Consuming Tomorrow” edition of the conference. During the same project period, work began on a bilingual e-learning programme based on the five-module curriculum.

2025-2026

Edition 4: Digital Expansion and Continued Delivery

The ongoing fourth edition continues the school workshops and residency pathway while extending the programme’s digital reach. By mid-2026, Generation Zukunft had completed 21 school visits and recorded approximately 2,700 pupil contacts. In May 2026, Fashion Council Germany published the bilingual Fashion & Impact e-learning programme through the re.fashion Academy. The digital format makes the five-module curriculum available in German and English, including to young people and educators beyond the participating schools. Following the school visits and voluntary Generation Zukunft assessment, 48 pupils were selected to take part in the next Fashion Education Residency at Dumfries House. The residency took place from 2 to 8 November 2026, combining learning about sustainable craftsmanship, upcycling and textiles with professional exchange and an international group experience.

Impact through Partnership

The educational pathway depends on partners who bring different resources to a shared aim: widening young people's access to fashion education and the fashion industry.

Fashion Council Germany develops the curriculum, works with schools and coordinates delivery. The King's Foundation provides the setting for the residency at Dumfries House, expertise in craft education and connections across the UK. Funding from The PVH Foundation supports the continuity and expansion of Generation Zukunft. Together, these contributions connect school-based learning with practical making, international exchange and encounters with professionals. The following sections examine each partner's role in making this pathway possible.

3.1 The PVH Foundation

The PVH Foundation launched the Community Partner Program in 2022 with a $10 million investment over four years to amplify access to opportunities in the global fashion industry for underrepresented communities. Throughout the years, we have worked to raise awareness of fashion careers and expanded mentorship to build professional networks and supported creative programs in and out of school to foster skills and educational growth. We've also created a strong talent pipeline from high school through professional development, helping to build systems for talent retention. The program has emphasized practical training and skill building, offering pathways into the industry for non-traditional talent, including those re-entering the workforce or changing careers.

An important part of this work is helping people discover and prepare for careers in fashion. In 2022, the Foundation announced a global funding initiative for nonprofit organisations working to increase awareness of, and access to, the industry. Its priorities included career exploration, technical skills and mentorship for secondary school pupils, alongside practical training for people entering fashion through alternative educational or professional routes. This included people changing careers, returning to employment or entering the industry without a university qualification. The initiative therefore supports access at different stages of education and working life.

Generation Zukunft fits directly within the Foundation's focus on career awareness and educational opportunity. Fashion Council Germany was named among its initial European partners in the 2022 funding initiative, and the organisations have worked together on the programme since that year. Generation Zukunft places particular emphasis on young people experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage and communities underrepresented in fashion. Beginning in schools allows the programme to reach pupils while they are considering their future education and employment, introducing them to an industry they may have had little opportunity to explore. The Foundation's financial support helps Fashion Council Germany keep participation free of charge and offer learning opportunities in schools and beyond. Practical workshops connect teaching about fashion's social and environmental impact with experience of materials and techniques, while encounters with professionals introduce pupils to occupations and educational pathways. The support also contributes to the education residency at Dumfries House and the Fashion Zukunft conference, organised with The King's Foundation. These experiences give pupils opportunities to explore fashion as a possible field of study or work and to speak directly with people working in the industry.

3.2 The King's Foundation

The King's Foundation was formed in 1990 as King Charles III's nature and sustainability charity. Inspired by the vision and values of His Majesty, who remains the charity's Royal Founding President, the Foundation builds sustainable communities and transforms lives through practical education programmes and regeneration projects – aiming to bring people, places and planet together in harmony. The charity offers education courses in traditional and outdoor skills for almost 15,000 students annually and spearheads regeneration projects to revitalise communities and historic buildings in over 30 countries. They also manage green spaces on behalf of His Majesty, ensuring everyone has access to nature. The King's Foundation is headquartered at its flagship regeneration project, Dumfries House in Ayrshire, Scotland, and acts as custodian of other historic Royal sites including the Castle of Mey in Caithness, Scotland, and Highgrove Gardens in Gloucestershire.

The Foundation also carries out its work at educational and cultural hubs in London, based at The King's Foundation School for Traditional Arts in Shoreditch, Trinity Buoy Wharf on the River Thames and the Garrison Chapel in Chelsea. In addition to its UK presence, the Foundation delivers programmes and projects in over a dozen sites worldwide.



Dumfries House

The Dumfries House estate in Ayrshire, Scotland, is the headquarters of The King's Foundation charity, founded by His Majesty King Charles III. The Foundation delivers life-changing education programmes and health and wellbeing initiatives on the estate and is responsible for opening Dumfries House to the public. Each year, an estimated 170,000 people enjoy the estate grounds, with 10,000 students of all ages taking part in The King's Foundation education programmes which are offered on site. Dumfries House itself attracts around 20,000 visitors every year to experience one of the largest collections of Chippendale furniture in the world, which is on display throughout the historic residence.

The Castle of Mey

The Castle of Mey was the much-loved residence of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother from 1952 until 1996, when it was gifted by Her Majesty with an endowment to The Queen Elizabeth Castle of Mey Trust. As the now sole trustee, The King's Foundation is responsible for the stewardship of the historic Royal property and gardens, underpinned by His Majesty King Charles III's enthusiasm for protecting the legacy of his grandmother's home and its ongoing positive impact on the local community. Now a five-star visitor attraction which regularly welcomes tens of thousands of visitors each year, the Castle of Mey helps to boost employment and tourism in the local area. The Castle's facilities include a visitor centre, animal centre, and former granary building which has been developed into luxury bed and breakfast accommodation, a conference centre and a wedding venue.

Highgrove Gardens

The King's Foundation acts as custodian of the iconic Highgrove Gardens which surround the much-loved private residence of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla. The gardens welcome almost 30,000 visitors between April and October every year, who can share in Their Majesties' enjoyment of the gardens. Managed organically and sustainably, the gardens have been shaped by The King's artistic vision over 40 years, and have become an important haven for flora and fauna. The sale of Highgrove Garden Tours, products and events support and enable the work of The King's Foundation. Inspired by the vision and values of His Majesty, the Foundation builds and supports communities where people, places and the planet can coexist in harmony. At Highgrove, in addition to acting as custodian of the gardens, The King's Foundation offers programmes and short courses focused on heritage and craft skills at specialist workshops on site.

The Garrison Chapel

In London, The Garrison Chapel, a Grade II-listed chapel within the former Chelsea Barracks, serves as a public exhibition space for the Foundation's work. Exhibitions, talks and events at The Garrison Chapel celebrate traditional arts, heritage craft skills and cultural exchange.


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In Conversation with Jacqueline Farrell, The King's Foundation



Jacqueline, how did the partnership between Fashion Council Germany and The King's Foundation begin?

Scott Lipinski reached out in 2019 to find out more about our work with school pupils at Dumfries House and our community programmes. During that conversation, we developed the idea of a conference. We shared a strategic view to bring more people together to talk about what the industry needed and to align around the same mission.

The conference was initially conceived as an industry-to-industry event, but for the first edition we also brought together about 120 pupils. They listened to the same speakers as the industry guests and we asked them what they had learned and what changes they would make.

The first conference showed that pupils were often not aware of the breadth of skills and jobs in the fashion industry. They also realised much more clearly the impact of fast fashion and why it matters how garments are made and where they go at the end of life.

I think at that point we realised that, for industry change to truly happen, we needed to work more regularly with the young people who were going to be our future consumers and employees. The youth element then became a really key part of our partnership.

Interview edited for length and clarity.

Why are intergenerational exchange and craftsmanship so important?

We have to be talking to our future consumers and future employees about the challenges the fashion industry faces and what needs to be done. But it is also important for the industry to understand the priorities of the younger generation.

At the first conference, speakers asked us, “How do I talk to a 14-year-old?” And we said, “How do you talk normally?” We have never dumbed down the messages for the audience’s age. Young people can understand complex concepts and go away feeling confident in the knowledge they have received and that they can do something with it.

Craftsmanship is also at the DNA of The King’s Foundation. When you put craftsmanship into fashion, there is an appreciation of the time and effort it takes to make clothes. When young people engage with the time it takes to produce something, there is a deepening of appreciation. Clothes are kept for longer and people start to shift their mindset.

What do young people take away from the residency at Dumfries House and the conference?

Any time you spend learning away from your traditional setting seems to deepen the experience and what you take away from it. Coming to Dumfries House, as the headquarters of The King’s Foundation, means trying a different approach: a real deep dive into craft skills, learning in and from nature, slowing down and looking at what we have around us.

The peer-to-peer learning is also important. The pupils spend time with other young people who are going through similar experiences and realise that they are not alone. They all love fashion, design and creativity, but they are also asking how they can love it in a sustainable way. Realising that you are part of this bigger group of people is empowering.

What is also really interesting is the questioning at the conference, particularly from the German students who have gone through the sustainability programme. Their questions can be really challenging for the panellists. Sometimes an industry guest gets this brilliantly observed question from a young person who has been doing the research, and it makes them sit up and think, “I need to really rethink certain things here.”

The more knowledge we can give young people, the better it will be for them to feel empowered and ask the right questions.

How has the conference evolved, and what impact do you see today?

It has become more interactive and inclusive. In the early days, we had panellists and keynote speakers talking to an audience, with maybe a little bit of Q&A. The format has changed significantly.

The opportunity to question has become much more democratic. We also introduced the carousel, where pupils try different skills and learn about different parts of the supply chain and the fashion industry. More recently, we added round tables where pupils meet their peers, work with an industry facilitator and are actively asked what they think the industry needs to do to change.

For the pupils, the impact is knowledge. They can make choices they did not know they could make before, whether that is buying less, upcycling more, buying second-hand or keeping things longer.

For the industry, each speaker goes away realising that they have been questioned by their future consumers. They have to think about whether their business model aligns with the values they know are going to be coming through.

Is there a moment from one of the conferences that has stayed with you?

At last year's conference, I remember getting goosebumps from the questions. Over the years, the conference has become more and more meaningful. It was the types of questions the pupils were asking, but also their body language: leaning forward in their chairs and thinking, "What's going to come next?" Seeing that happen meant a lot to me because it showed that the conference was really making a difference.

I also remember the very first conference, when we asked the pupils to write a pledge and hang it on a tree. As the pledges were added, the tree bloomed. What really took me by surprise was what the pupils wrote and what the conference had meant to them. We are very proud at The King's Foundation to be working with Fashion Council Germany to show the next generation the possibilities, creativity and job opportunities in the fashion industry.



A Closer Look: The 2025 Edition

The one-week residency connected theoretical knowledge with practical crafting skills, cultural experiences and professional exchange.

From 3 to 8 November 2025, 48 pupils and four accompanying teachers travelled to Dumfries House in Scotland. The residency continued the **Generation Zukunft** curriculum by allowing pupils to apply knowledge from the school workshops through materials, craft and professional practice. They attended the **Fashion Zukunft** conference, took part in practical workshops and exchanged ideas with professionals and peers from Germany and the UK.

The pupil programme, organised by The King's Foundation, highlighted the craftsmanship and manual expertise behind fashion and textile production. At the same time, the shared activities supported social skills, confidence and a sense of community among pupils from different schools and regions.

4.1 The Pupil Residency Programme

Dumfries House and its workshops, gardens and wider estate provided an educational setting beyond the classroom. The programme combined sustainability, craftsmanship, career orientation and international exchange. Practical activities and conversations with professionals helped pupils connect the subjects introduced during the school workshops with creative practice and possible career pathways.



Participation in the Fashion Zukunft Conference

The first full programme day was dedicated to the Fashion Zukunft conference. Pupils attended panel discussions and participated in interactive formats where they could contribute their own questions and experiences.

The conference gave them direct access to professionals from different areas of the fashion industry and introduced them to current discussions about its future. Pupils participated actively rather than remaining passive listeners, showing that their perspectives formed a relevant part of the conversation.

For many, this was their first experience of an international industry conference. It made professional spaces within fashion feel more accessible and showed that questions discussed during the Generation Zukunft workshops are also relevant to designers, organisations and other industry professionals. A detailed description of the conference formats follows below, while the findings are analysed in Chapter 5.

Exchange with the FASHION X CRAFT Designers

Following the conference, pupils met designers from the FASHION X CRAFT programme in an informal setting. The designers shared insights into their work, professional development and experiences with traditional craft techniques. They also discussed the challenges of creative careers and the importance of continuous learning.

These conversations made professional opportunities within fashion more tangible and approachable. They showed pupils that there is no single route into a creative profession and that careers can develop through education, practical experience and collaboration.

eBay Upcycling Workshop

As part of the residency, pupils participated in an upcycling workshop initiated by eBay. Before travelling to Scotland, each pupil had selected a second-hand garment through the eBay platform. Supported by Scottish designers, they examined their garments, developed transformation ideas and learned basic sewing techniques. By the end of the workshop, every participant had created an individual piece.

The workshop translated upcycling from a theoretical response to textile waste into direct creative practice. Pupils learned how an unwanted garment can be transformed and kept in use. Measuring, sewing and adapting the garments also gave them a greater appreciation of the time, patience and skill involved in clothing production. The activity encouraged them to understand second-hand clothing as both a resource and an opportunity for personal expression.

Cultural Excursion to Glasgow

The programme also included a cultural excursion to Glasgow. The visit began at Timorous Beasties, a design studio known for its distinctive wallpapers and textiles. Pupils learned about the studio's creative process and observed screen-printing techniques first-hand.

The visit demonstrated how artistic ideas are developed through experimentation and technical knowledge before becoming finished products. It also showed the close relationship between creative work and production within a professional design business.

The pupils then visited the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and explored the city. This cultural element broadened their experience of Scotland and demonstrated that architecture, art and the social history of a place can all provide inspiration for fashion and textile design.

Wool Wonders

Another full programme day was dedicated to Wool Wonders. Working in four smaller groups, pupils rotated through workshops on knitting, weaving, Sashiko mending, wool and textile construction.

Local members of the Knitwise group introduced the pupils to basic knitting techniques. Each participant received knitting needles to take home, and many continued knitting together during the evening. This showed how practical learning could inspire independent engagement beyond the organised workshop.

Using weave boards, pupils explored the construction and cultural significance of tartan patterns. During the Sashiko workshop, they learned how visible stitching can strengthen a textile while adding a new design element. A further session introduced the characteristics and processing of wool.

Together, the workshops gave pupils a greater appreciation of traditional textile knowledge and the time involved in making and repairing textiles. They also demonstrated how craftsmanship can contribute to more careful material use while continuing to inspire contemporary fashion.

Overall, the residency connected classroom-based learning with practical experience, professional exchange and cultural discovery. It gave pupils the opportunity to develop textile skills, explore different career pathways and experience themselves as active participants in shaping a more sustainable fashion system.

4.2 Fashion Zukunft 2025: Craft as a Future Practice

The conference positioned craft as a way of understanding the full life cycle of garments. By foregrounding materials, labour, skill and care, its formats connected the making of clothing with its continued use, repair and valuation. This extended the idea of craftsmanship beyond production towards what the programme described as ‘the craft of using’. Consumer education was therefore framed as one condition for sustaining artisanal knowledge and supporting more considered relationships with textiles.

The conference also considered how traditional skills can be sustained through intergenerational exchange and adapted through contemporary design and technology. Craft was presented not as a nostalgic alternative to innovation, but as a collaborative practice through which material knowledge, cultural heritage and new forms of production can meet. For younger participants, this framing connected sustainability with tangible skills, stories and forms of creative participation. The programme additionally considered how media and peer-to-peer communication might circulate these forms of knowledge beyond the event.


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Conference Formats

The conference combined keynote speeches, panel discussions, roundtable sessions and practical activity stations. During the roundtables, pupils worked in small, mixed groups with an expert facilitator before presenting their findings and questions to the wider audience. This section records the purpose and structure of each format; the participants’ responses are analysed in Chapter 5.

DAWN: Behind the Seams, Beyond Transparency

The conference opened with a keynote by Ines Rust, CEO and co-founder of Dawn Denim. In "DAWN: Behind the Seams, Beyond Transparency", she used the company’s factory in Vietnam as a case study and presented the brand’s account of working conditions and resource management through photographs, video material and a short Q&A. The session introduced the social dimension of sustainability through a concrete example of how a fashion company communicates its production practices.

The Future Lies in Craft

The day continued with a panel discussion moderated by The King’s Foundation, titled “The Future Lies in Craft: The Next Generation of Makers – How Craft Inspires Reconnection, Sustainability, and Shared Heritage Across Generations”. The session explored the role of craft in reconnecting people with nature, encouraging more conscious consumption patterns, and fostering intergenerational dialogue through the preservation and evolution of traditional skills. The panel featured designers Jon Liesenfeld and Lennart Bohle from the 2025 FASHION X CRAFT initiative, alongside milliner Barnaby Horn and designer Siobhan Mackenzie.

Reclaiming Material

The first round of roundtable sessions included “Reclaiming Material: Designing Between 2D and 3D” led by designer Karen Jessen. Sharing her personal design philosophy centred on material transformation and reinterpretation, Jessen demonstrated how discarded materials including denim, leather, bicycle inner tubes, and crochet tablecloths can be reclaimed and given new value. Participants were introduced to two creative approaches: designing directly in three dimensions through draping and experimentation on a dress form, and developing concepts in two dimensions through collage techniques. Each participant created an individual design using the collage method, discovering innovative ways to reimagine existing materials.

COSH!

CEO and founder Niki de Schryver addressed the topic of psychology and consumption in fashion, presenting the COSH! platform and its Conscious Shopping Guide. Her session explored the links between waste, colonialism, and social media-driven consumer culture, while introducing practical tools such as digital wardrobes and repair guides that support more conscious consumption habits. Through interactive discussions, students reflected on their own purchasing behaviours and explored how digital solutions can encourage more sustainable choices.

Youth Future Canvas

The Fashion Council Germany team facilitated two interactive roundtables. The first “The Youth Future Canvas” invited students to discuss and reflect on five central questions:

1. What is wrong today?

2. What should change?

3. Who must act?

4. How should the fashion of the future feel?

5. What can we do today?

Fashion & Me Reflection Wall

The second activity, "Fashion & Me: Reflection Wall", explored the relationship between fashion, self-image and inclusion. Pupils responded to questions including "How does fashion make you feel?", "Who decides what is considered cool?" and "How can we include everyone?". Sentence prompts encouraged personal reflection and discussion; the resulting themes are analysed in Chapter 5.

Politics and Fashion

Rebecca Habtemariam, editor and host at DIE ZEIT, host and freelance data journalist, continued the programme with a keynote entitled "How the Current Political Climate Is Reflected in Fashion". Through a series of questions, she invited pupils to reflect on the relationship between politics, culture and fashion. Participants recorded their responses on Post-it notes, which were assembled on a central pinboard; the findings are examined in Chapter 5.

Designing for Change

The final panel of the day, "Designing for Change: How Fashion Can Shape a More Sustainable Future – Rewriting Consumer Culture Through Fashion Psychology and Holistic Sustainability", brought together designers Laura Gerte and Natascha von Hirschhausen with fashion psychologist, consultant and author Shakaila Forbes-Bell. Moderated by Tamara Cincik, CEO and founder of Fashion Roundtable, the discussion addressed the cultural and environmental dimensions of sustainability, including upcycling, second-hand fashion, deadstock materials, zero-waste design and ethical production.

Tabletop Activities

Throughout the day, a series of tabletop activities provided hands-on opportunities for participants to engage with craft, technology, and material innovation. These activities were delivered by local tutors from Dumfries House and members of The King's Foundation network.

- Pleating and hand stitching: Graeme Bone
- Weaving activity: Sarah McClymont (Future Textiles Team, The King's Foundation)
- Hand-stitching buttons: Merie Phillips (Sewing Bee, The King's Foundation)
- Half-scale mannequin toiling: Lesley Ann and Martin Darcey (Glasgow Clyde College)
- Virtual reality pattern design: Ciorstaidh Monk (CLO3D)
- Exploring fabrics under microscopes: Jo Dempster and Rachel Dunbar (STEM Team, The King's Foundation)
- Meet the Sheep!: Heather McPike (Farm Team, The King's Foundation)
- Wool mapping activity: Harriet Fletcher-Gilhuys (Great British Wool Revival, Fashion Roundtable)



Berlin-based textile artist and designer Karen Jessen founded her label in 2012. Working across fashion, costume and sculpture, she transforms reclaimed materials through collecting, sorting and experimental construction. Her practice combines traditional craftsmanship with contemporary, digitally informed aesthetics and foregrounds the lasting value of materials beyond seasonal fashion cycles.



Interview

Karen Jessen

Karen, you work across many different areas of fashion, as a lecturer at fashion universities, as a designer for your own namesake label, and through costume design for theatre and film productions. How do these different practices influence one another, and what does moving between education, fashion, and costume allow you to explore that you might not be able to in just one of these fields?

Craftsmanship is the connecting thread between all my different fields. I first and foremost see myself as a craftsman, trained in dressmaking, textiles, pattern cutting, draping, and the use of different machinery. These skills allow me to move freely between fashion, costume, set design, interior design and other creative fields.

Teaching adds another important dimension. I enjoy sharing my practical knowledge with the next generation while promoting a more sustainable future for fashion. At the same time, my students constantly inspire me with their fresh perspectives and ideas. This exchange between making, teaching, and experimenting keeps my own practice evolving.

Your design practice often involves transforming and reinterpreting existing materials, from textiles to objects that carry a sense of craft and personal history, such as crochet tablecloths made by your grandmother. In your work, these materials are given a new context and a new value. How important is this connection between generations to your practice, and how have the people and traditions you grew up with shaped the way you think about materials, craft, and design today?

I grew up in a very different world from the highly digital one that young people experience today. It was a rural, very analogue environment on the northern German coast, far removed from fashion trends, magazines, and shops. From an early age, I was fascinated by dressing up, and I was fortunate to grow up in a family with strong craftsmanship skills. They taught me how to make and transform things myself, including my own clothes.

Upcycling was already part of my upbringing — we simply didn't call it that back then. Reusing, transforming, and giving new life to existing materials was a natural part of everyday life. This way of thinking was instilled in me from childhood, and my approach to design today is really a natural continuation of that.

One of my most important missions is to restore the value, identity, and soul of a garment. This is something we can learn from the past, when each thoughtfully crafted piece was made to last and therefore carried a much deeper value than in today's culture of overconsumption. A timeless, beautifully crafted garment creates a different relationship with what we wear — one that is rooted in appreciation, quality, and longevity. If we can bring this mindset back into the mainstream, we will have taken a significant step away from the culture of fast fashion.

During the roundtable you hosted at the Fashion Zukunft Conference 2025, participants participants explored 2D and 3D design approaches and developed their own concepts through collage. What surprised you most when working alongside the teenagers, both through the conversations you had while they were creating and through the ideas, experimentation, and creative outcomes they produced?

What surprised me most was how differently the students approached the process. Some began intuitively and without hesitation, simply experimenting with the materials and trusting that there was no "wrong" way to create. Others focused strongly on achieving a perfect result from the start, which sometimes made it harder for them to begin at all.

The conversations made clear that letting go of perfectionism often opened up the most exciting ideas. The less afraid they were of making mistakes, the more freely they experimented—and the more original and creative their final concepts became.

Young people today are growing up in a highly digital environment, shaped by trends and facing a culture of overconsumption. Do you think we need to place greater emphasis on reconnecting younger generations with craft, materials, and the psychological and emotional dimensions of making?

Absolutely. I believe we need to inspire younger generations to rediscover the value and pleasure of the analogue world. After more than ten years of teaching, I have seen how increasingly difficult it can be to engage young people with the slower, more demanding processes of craftsmanship.

My approach is to give them a sense of achievement early on — creating something tangible and physically satisfying within a relatively short time. Experiencing the excitement of a physical outcome can be incredibly motivating and encourages them to invest more time, patience, and perseverance in mastering the foundations of tailoring and design. For me, reconnecting with craft is not only about learning a skill; it is about experiencing the emotional value of making something with your own hands.

How was your experience at the last Fashion Zukunft conference, particularly meeting young people alongside representatives from the fashion industry?

My experience at the Fashion Zukunft Conference was truly inspiring. It was a pleasure to meet established experts from the fashion industry alongside young students who are just beginning to explore their own paths within it.

Bringing these different perspectives together created a unique and open atmosphere. It led to meaningful conversations and genuine connections, while also reminding us of the curiosity, uncertainty, and excitement that come with taking those first steps into the industry. It was especially encouraging to see how much inspiration and exchange can happen when experience and fresh ideas meet.

After your experience at the conference, what is one thing you would like to see more of in fashion education and in the way we prepare the next generation of designers and consumers?

As a fashion practitioner, I would love to see more hands-on learning in fashion education: more working with materials, more analogue processes, and a stronger focus on craft.

Digital tools are valuable, but they should be complemented by the experience of making things by hand. When young designers are encouraged to experiment, make mistakes, and work through unexpected outcomes, they develop a deeper understanding of both the process and the material. Things may not always go as planned—but often, those moments can lead to the most interesting and meaningful results.

A strong foundation in practical craft not only gives future designers greater confidence and independence; it also helps them create garments that feel more individual, thoughtful, and lasting.

Shakaila Forbes-Bell



© JKG Photography

Shakaila Forbes-Bell is a fashion psychologist, consultant, author and founder of Fashion is Psychology. Her work examines how clothing shapes identity, self-perception and consumer behaviour, with particular attention to representation in fashion media. Through research, writing and public speaking, she translates fashion psychology into accessible perspectives for brands and audiences.

Ines Rust



© Andrea Katheder

Ines Rust is co-founder and CEO of Dawn Denim, a brand producing jeans in its own factory in Saigon, Vietnam. Her work focuses on responsible production, transparency and fair working conditions across the supply chain. At the conference, she used Dawn Denim as a practical case study of how social sustainability can be embedded in daily business operations.

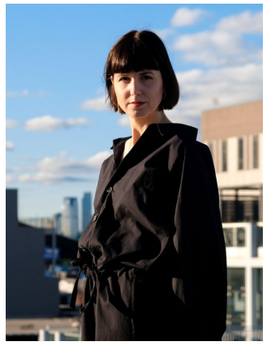
Niki de Schryver



© Nathalie Samain

Niki de Schryver is the founder of COSH!, an online platform that helps consumers identify fair and circular fashion businesses. Drawing on experience in production management, digitalisation and sustainable retail, she works to make responsible shopping more accessible while scrutinising misleading sustainability claims and increasing the visibility of local alternatives.

Natascha von Hirschhausen is a Berlin-based designer whose practice centres on zero-waste construction, natural mono-materials and local, made-to-order production. Her work combines technical experimentation with a critique of overproduction and resource-intensive fashion systems. She also teaches emerging designers, positioning sustainability as a design method rather than an additional feature.



Natascha von Hirschhausen

Laura Gerte



Laura Gerte makes clothes for women who already know.

Collections are rooted in feminist and socio-cultural inquiry, translated into radical silhouettes — future punk charged with raw femininity. The pieces move, they twist, they provoke: playful yet defiant, provocative but soft, fragile and resilient. Each garment is crafted from reclaimed materials, carrying the traces of past lives, transformed.

Rebecca Habtemariam is a Berlin-based journalist and host. She studied social sciences and journalism and currently works as a freelance data journalist as well as an editor and host for DIE ZEIT's TikTok channel. Her work connects political analysis, digital storytelling and questions of how fashion communicates class, belonging and protest.

© Gilbert-Garcia Dias



Rebecca Habtemariam

Lennart Bohle



© Eleanor Kenny

Lennart Bohle is a state-certified tailor and fashion design graduate whose practice combines traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design. His training includes high-level tailoring, university study in Pforzheim and an exchange year in Taipei, as well as experience in couture studios. His work demonstrates how technical skill and international perspectives can shape individual creative pathways.

Jon Liesenfeld

Jon Liesenfeld is a fashion designer and 2025 FASHION X CRAFT participant. Working primarily with reclaimed leather and textiles, he explores mending, repair, surface development and the relationship between generations. His practice values visible traces of use and combines traditional techniques with contemporary forms, treating material history as a resource for new design.



© Eleanor Kenny

Siobhan Mackenzie



© Eleanor Kenny

Siobhan Mackenzie is a Scottish fashion designer whose label draws on Highland heritage and contemporary kilt-making. Her practice combines traditional craftsmanship with experimental techniques and a slow-fashion approach. Through local production and a strong connection to place, she reinterprets classic Scottish dress for a contemporary context.

Barnaby Horn

Barnaby Horn is a London-based milliner, Royal College of Art graduate and drag performer. His work combines traditional hat-making with digital projection, live performance and stage effects to explore queer identity and shared desire. A recipient of several millinery awards, he joined The King's Foundation Millinery Fellowship.



Tamara Cincik

Interview



Tamara Cincik is the founder and CEO of Fashion Roundtable, a UK think tank working across fashion, business and public policy. Drawing on more than twenty years of experience, she advises industry and government on sustainability, manufacturing and strategic transformation. Her work focuses on translating fashion-sector expertise into policy dialogue and systemic change.

Tamara, as the founder and CEO of Fashion Roundtable, you work closely with policymakers, industry leaders, and brands to shape frameworks for the future of fashion. What have you learned from younger generations, and how have those perspectives influenced the way you approach your work?

I think young people are dealing with a lot of pressure and anxiety. The pandemic was awful for teenagers and people in their early twenties in particular. Add to that AI taking entry-level jobs, and I think we are seeing a generation who need to be valued for the incredible insights they offer in terms of resilience and solutions which support people and the planet.

You have been part of several editions of the Fashion Zukunft conferences at Dumfries House, both as a moderator and a panellist. How have you seen the conversations around the future of fashion evolve over the different editions?

I feel a lot more of the students who attend are more vocal, less shy and engaging in the conversations with insight and passion, which is great to see growing year on year.

What are some of the biggest changes or new conversations you have noticed emerging around the future of fashion in recent years?

Upcycling has grown from a hobby craft into a viable business and the growth of interest in natural fibres is really encouraging.

Do you think the fashion industry needs more spaces and touchpoints where younger generations, industry leaders, and policymakers can come together like at The Fashion Zukunft conference? What would these spaces or touchpoints ideally look like?

100%, the education system needs to lean into how things are done with The King's Foundation, which is very skills and hand crafts based learning, which not only enhances wellbeing, is also AI proof skills based learning for life.

From your expertise and experience within the fashion industry, what is one change you would most like to see when it comes to shaping the future of fashion in terms of sustainability, craft and education?

That we boost the maker economy with more skills training across education, from an early age. Fashion focuses on design, but there are many viable jobs within fashion which are exciting, good careers.



You are an Honorary Fellow of The King's Foundation and have worked closely with the organisation for many years. What does The King's Foundation's philosophy of harmony mean to you personally, and how has it influenced your work and perspective on the future of fashion?

I am very much a supporter of His Majesty's Philosophy of Harmony. It aligns with my own values and those that inform my work with Fashion Roundtable and The Great British Wool Revival. We have a Creative Wellbeing Economy framework for our work which is in step with Harmony, placing equity in the value of people and planet. It is an honour to be a Fellow of The King's Foundation. I really admire their work and commitment to making creativity widely accessible.

Impact in Practice

5.1 Evidence Base and Scope

Data was collected at two stages of the Scotland residency in 2025. The first set of responses was gathered during the **Fashion Zukunft** conference on the opening day of the residency programme. Participants responded to interactive Menti questions and took part in keynote reflections, roundtable discussions, the Youth Future Canvas and the Fashion & Me Reflection Wall. These activities both captured participants' perspectives at the beginning of the residency and formed an important part of the learning experience themselves.

A second survey was conducted on the final day and completed by 33 of the 48 participating pupils, a response rate of approximately 69%. It explored what they had learned throughout the conference and residency, which experiences had been most valuable and which forms of sustainable action they could imagine applying in their own lives.

Importantly, participants did not enter the programme without prior knowledge. Before travelling to Scotland, the German pupils had already taken part in a **Generation Zukunft** school workshop addressing sustainable fashion and its social and environmental dimensions. The conference-day findings therefore reflect both this existing foundation and the new insights generated through the conference. The final survey captures perceived learning and immediate outcomes across the residency as a whole, but it cannot isolate the effect of an individual activity.

The impact of the **Fashion Zukunft** conference and Scotland residency should consequently not be understood primarily as creating awareness from the ground up. The available evidence instead indicates how the programme deepened and broadened existing knowledge, introduced new social, political and creative perspectives, and helped participants translate awareness into practical experience and a stronger sense of personal agency.


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Overview

Collected Data from the 2025 Fashion Zukunft Conference and Education Residency.

1. Menti Questionnaire

Moment: conference day

Focus: consumption, awareness, personal values and visions for the future of fashion

Limitation: question-level response numbers are not documented, so the findings cannot be assumed to represent the full cohort.

2. Keynote Analysis

Moment: conference day

Focus: aesthetic judgement, political expression, status and belonging

Limitation: the available material does not document the group context or original coding procedure.

3. Youth Future Canvas

Moment: conference day

Focus: problems within the fashion system, responsible actors, desired changes and future values

Limitation: The responses were developed collectively and may have been influenced by the framing and moderation of the discussion.

4. Fashion & Me Wall

Moment: conference day

Focus: identity, confidence, judgement and inclusion in relation to clothing

Limitation: contributions were made in a new peer-group setting, which may have affected participants' willingness to disclose personal experiences.

5. Final-day Survey

Moment: end of the residency

Focus: perceived learning, practical skills, future intentions, programme highlights and willingness to recommend the experience

Limitation: the survey was completed by 33 of 48 pupils (approximately 69%) and was not linked to a comparable baseline measurement.

Johannes, *pupil*

"My highlight was the Fashion Zukunft conference. I gained many insights into what you can do in the fashion world. They discussed the psychology of fashion, how it can influence purchasing decisions and the effect that colours can have."

5.2 Conference-Day Findings

1. Menti Questionnaire

Throughout the conference, participants were invited to respond to a series of interactive questions via Menti. The anonymous, real-time format enabled the audience to view the overall responses on a screen. The questions explored participants' consumption habits, awareness of the fashion industry's social and environmental impacts, ideas for increasing the visibility of craft and fair fashion among young people, and their visions for the future of fashion.

Consumption Behaviour and Awareness

When asked about their clothing consumption habits, most participants reported purchasing new clothes only when they genuinely needed them or every few months. The emotional response to buying new clothing was overwhelmingly positive, with most respondents associating it with feelings of happiness, confidence and satisfaction.

Style and appearance emerged as the most important factor influencing purchasing decisions, selected by 71% of respondents. Durability and quality were prioritised by only 20%, while sustainability, price, brands and trends were considered less significant factors. At the same time, more than half of the audience acknowledged feeling at least some pressure from social media regarding fashion choices.

Awareness of the fashion industry's impacts appeared relatively high. 70% of participants agreed that fashion has a significant impact on the environment. The issues causing the greatest concern were environmental pollution, the exploitation of workers, overproduction and fast fashion, as well as animal suffering and testing. However, despite this awareness, 76% of respondents indicated that they only partly knew where their clothing came from, highlighting a gap between concern and knowledge of supply chains.

When asked what the term "fair fashion" meant to them, participants most frequently referred to fair wages and ethical working conditions, equal access, sustainable basics, and broader environmental and social sustainability.

Purchase priorities and awareness:

76%
only partly knew where their clothes came from

71%
selected style and appearance

70%
agreed that fashion has a significant environmental impact

20%
prioritised durability and quality.

Visions for the Future of Fashion

At the end of the conference, after engaging with panel discussions, expert inputs, roundtable conversations and examples from young creatives, participants were asked to imagine the future of fashion.

The responses revealed a strong desire for a fashion industry that is sustainable, ethical, creative and centred on individual expression. Many participants expressed hope for a shift away from fast fashion towards more conscious consumption, fair production practices and greater environmental responsibility. Students particularly envisioned a future in which innovation, diversity, creativity and sustainability coexist.

At the same time, a smaller group voiced concerns that, without meaningful intervention, the industry could become increasingly driven by mass production, short-lived microtrends, excessive consumption and declining product quality. These responses demonstrate both optimism for positive transformation and awareness of the challenges that remain.

Values and Drivers of Change

When asked which values should define the future of fashion, participants most frequently selected sustainability, diversity and inclusion, fairness, and creativity. They also identified young people and designers as the key actors who should shape the future of the industry.

To preserve traditional craft skills for future generations, the most popular suggestions were introducing craft education in schools and fostering collaborations between young designers and artisans.

Participants were also asked what inspired them to think differently about fashion and craft. The most frequently selected sources of inspiration were influencers and creators who openly shared the making process, art and culture, and documentaries, films and media stories.

Finally, respondents identified social-media storytelling campaigns as the most effective way to encourage appreciation for craftsmanship. Other highly ranked approaches included school projects and workshops, collaborations between the music, art and fashion sectors, and influencers showcasing behind-the-scenes production processes.

Taken together, these responses establish the central tensions explored across the conference. They are synthesised alongside the keynote and roundtable material in the following Cross-Cutting Findings section.



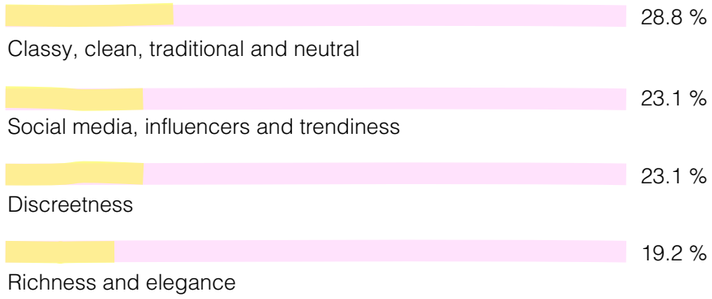
2. Keynote Analysis: How the Current Political Climate Is Reflected in Fashion

During her keynote presentation, Rebecca Habtemariam engaged the audience through a series of interactive questions. Participants were provided with Post-it notes and pens and invited to write down their responses. After the presentation, attendees displayed their answers on pinboards, creating a collective visualisation of the audience's perspectives.

Aesthetics, Status and Conformity

When presented with images representing current fashion trends such as Old Money, Classic Chic, Quiet Luxury, the Tradwife Aesthetic and the Clean Girl Aesthetic, participants were asked about the associations these styles evoked. Common responses included luxury, social media, hype, artificiality, the visibility of class systems, wealth, self-confidence and aesthetics.

The second question focused on conservative fashion and what makes it appealing. The most frequently mentioned characteristics were:



Additional comments highlighted several reasons for the appeal of conservative fashion. Participants noted that it can project the appearance of wealth, help individuals blend in rather than stand out, and reduce the risk of exclusion or bullying. Others emphasised its versatility, describing it as suitable for many social situations. Further associations included professionalism, conformity, the pressure to appear well-groomed and a desire to follow current trends.

The responses revealed how contemporary fashion is understood not only as a matter of personal style but also as a medium through which social status and political values are communicated. The associations generated by trends such as Old Money, Quiet Luxury and the Clean Girl Aesthetic demonstrate that participants perceive these styles as markers of social status and class distinction. Terms such as “luxury”, “higher class”, “rich” and “making class systems visible” suggest a recognition that fashion can function as a visual language through which privilege and social hierarchy are communicated.

The appeal of conservative fashion appears to lie largely in its promise of social acceptance and conformity. Frequent references to being “classy”, “clean”, “neutral” and “discreet” indicate that participants associate these styles with respectability and professionalism. Notably, many responses emphasised the desire to fit in, avoid judgement and reduce the risk of exclusion or bullying. This suggests that conservative fashion may provide a sense of social security by minimising visibility and signalling adherence to dominant norms. At the same time, the prominence of social media and influencer culture in the responses highlights how digital platforms contribute to the normalisation and dissemination of these aesthetics.

Fashion as Political Expression

Participants were also asked which clothing items they had recently encountered that symbolised political protest. Among 47 responses, hats, T-shirts, scarves and badges were mentioned. Some respondents referred to more symbolic forms of fashion activism, such as actress Cate Blanchett’s public support for Palestine through the colours of a red-carpet outfit. Others suggested that consciously wearing clothing from ethical companies rather than fast-fashion brands can itself constitute a political statement.

Finally, participants reflected on effective ways of expressing political values through fashion. Among the 47 responses collected, the most common suggestions included:

- statements or slogans on clothing;
- symbols or logos, mentioned in eight responses;
- costumes referencing local political groups such as “Stadtbild”;
- scarves displaying anti-fascist messages such as “Fck NZS/AFD”;
- T-shirts featuring statements such as “Protect the Dolls”.

Participants also referred to broader issues including war, gender equality and football culture. Examples of political values currently displayed and highly visible in society included:

- Make America Great Again (MAGA) merchandise;
- the colours of the LGBTQ+ community;
- Black Lives Matter apparel;
- the Tradwife aesthetic as a visual expression associated with right-wing political values.

The discussion of political fashion revealed a narrower range of examples. Participants most frequently identified visible and explicit forms of political expression, such as slogans, symbols, logos and colour schemes. This indicates that political communication through fashion is often understood as requiring a clear and recognisable message. Examples such as MAGA merchandise, LGBTQ+ colours, anti-fascist slogans and “Protect the Dolls” shirts demonstrate how clothing can serve as a tool for signalling political affiliations, values and solidarity with particular communities.

Relatively few participants referred to more subtle forms of political expression, such as ethical consumption, sustainable fashion practices or the politics embedded within everyday aesthetic choices. This may suggest that overt symbols and statements are more readily recognised as political than the less visible social, economic and environmental implications of fashion consumption.

The responses reflect a central tension discussed throughout Rebecca Habtemariam’s keynote: fashion simultaneously functions as a mechanism of conformity and a medium of resistance. While conservative and luxury-inspired aesthetics are often valued for their ability to facilitate belonging and social acceptance, fashion can also be mobilised to challenge norms, communicate political beliefs and express collective identities.

One particularly interesting finding is that many participants described conservative fashion as attractive because it helps people “fit in” and avoid negative judgement. The appeal of these aesthetics may therefore be connected less to admiration for conservative values themselves than to the social advantages associated with appearing respectable and socially legible. This insight connects directly to Rebecca Habtemariam’s broader argument about the political dimensions of seemingly “neutral” fashion choices.

Roundtable Findings

In small mixed groups of UK and German students, the pupils had time to reflect on and discuss the questions and topics presented during the conference. At the end of the session, all groups presented their findings to one another in the roundtable room.

3. Youth Future Canvas

The participants identified several major problems with the fashion industry today. One of the most frequently mentioned issues was fast fashion, which was associated with poor-quality clothing, unsustainable production methods and the constant pressure to keep up with changing trends. Participants also highlighted the overwhelming number of clothing options available, the rise of microtrends and the influence of social media, which creates pressure to buy new clothes regularly. Concerns were also raised about pricing and production practices. The discussion emphasised the mismatch between the rapid pace of the industry and the time required for consumers to make informed purchasing decisions.

When discussing what should change, the pupils emphasised the need for a more sustainable and responsible fashion industry. They suggested that influencers should focus more on educating audiences about how clothes are produced rather than promoting brands and consumption. Other key ideas included increasing the use of recycled and reused materials, improving the durability and quality of clothing, and changing current production methods. Participants also called for more education about textiles and clothing production in schools, as well as a reduction in the social pressure associated with fashion and appearance.

Regarding responsibility for change, participants recognised that multiple groups have a role to play. They noted that brands, producers and influencers often encourage consumers to purchase low-quality products, contributing to overconsumption. At the same time, consumers were seen as important actors who should become more interested in buying higher-quality, reusable and longer-lasting clothing. Overall, participants viewed both the fashion industry and consumers as responsible for driving change.

Looking towards the future, participants envisioned a fashion industry that feels inspiring, inclusive, comfortable and freeing. They expressed a desire for fashion that combines the benefits of modern technology with traditional craftsmanship. Future fashion should help people feel more confident and represented while offering comfort and authenticity rather than the pressure of constant change.

Overall the responses show a strong awareness of the environmental, social and cultural challenges linked to fast fashion. The pupils were not only critical of current consumption patterns but also interested in practical solutions such as education, better-quality products and more responsible influence from brands and content creators. Their vision suggests a shift away from fast-paced consumerism towards a fashion culture that values sustainability, inclusivity, durability and personal expression.

4. Fashion & Me Reflection Wall

Participants described fashion as an important way of expressing their identity and emotions. Many associated fashion with positive feelings such as confidence and happiness, explaining that clothing allows them to be unique, express themselves and wear things they genuinely like. Fashion was seen as a tool for self-representation, helping individuals communicate who they are and feel comfortable in their own identity.

At the same time, the pupils also shared negative experiences. Fashion can create feelings of insecurity, particularly because unique styles often receive criticism or negative judgement from others. This highlights the social pressure that can be connected to clothing choices and personal appearance.

When reflecting on what they would like to change about fashion, pupils expressed a desire for a fashion culture that is more sustainable, affordable, individual, diverse and accepting. They wished for less judgement and negativity surrounding personal style and for a greater appreciation of individuality and creativity. Sustainability was also identified as an important goal, showing concern for the broader impact of fashion beyond personal expression.

The responses suggest that young people view fashion as much more than clothing: it is closely connected to identity, self-expression and self-confidence. While fashion can be empowering and bring joy, participants also recognised that social judgement can limit people's willingness to express themselves freely. Their reflections indicate a desire for a fashion culture that celebrates individuality, reduces stigma around unique styles and becomes more accessible and sustainable. Participants valued authenticity and wanted fashion to support rather than restrict personal expression.

“We already have so many clothes. We should make something new from what already exists.”

Millie, *pupil*

Cross-Cutting Findings from the Conference

The conference findings The conference activities reveal young participants that are aware of the environmental, social and political dimensions of fashion, while also recognising the tensions between personal expression, social pressure and sustainable consumption.

Strong Awareness of Fashion's Social and Environmental Impact

Across all activities, participants demonstrated a high level of awareness of the problems associated with the contemporary fashion industry. Fast fashion, overproduction, environmental pollution, worker exploitation, poor-quality garments and excessive consumption were consistently identified as major concerns. Participants showed a clear understanding that fashion has consequences beyond personal style and recognised the need for more ethical and sustainable production systems.

However, the data also revealed a knowledge gap regarding supply chains. While most participants expressed concern about the impacts of fashion, many acknowledged that they only partly understood where their clothes came from and how they were produced.

Attitude–Behaviour Gap

A recurring theme was the gap between pupils' expressed values and their reported purchasing behaviours. Sustainability, fairness, diversity and creativity were widely identified as important values for the future of fashion. Yet style and appearance remained the dominant factors influencing clothing purchases, while sustainability and durability played a less significant role in actual purchase choices.

Participants also recognised the influence of social media, trends and peer expectations on their behaviour. Although many were conscious of these pressures, discussions suggested that the impact of digital culture on consumption habits is often underestimated or operates subconsciously.

Fashion as Identity, Self-Expression and Belonging

Fashion was consistently described as a powerful tool for self-expression, confidence and identity formation. Participants valued clothing as a way to communicate individuality, creativity, emotions and personal values.

At the same time, they highlighted the social risks attached to fashion choices. Many reported that fear of judgement, exclusion or criticism can discourage authentic self-expression. This tension between individuality and social acceptance emerged repeatedly throughout the conference.

Fashion as a Reflection of Social Status and Political Values

The keynote discussions demonstrated that participants understood fashion as more than an aesthetic practice. Trends such as Old Money, Quiet Luxury and the Clean Girl aesthetic were widely interpreted as signals of social status, class, privilege and belonging.

Participants also recognised fashion as a means of political communication. Clothing was viewed as a way to express values, solidarity and political identities through slogans, symbols, colours and visible statements. However, overt forms of political expression were more readily identified than the political implications embedded in everyday consumption choices, ethical purchasing or sustainability practices.

A key insight was that the appeal of conservative and luxury-inspired aesthetics often stemmed less from ideological agreement than from their perceived ability to provide social acceptance, professionalism and protection from negative judgement.

Education and Transparency as Key Drivers of Change

Across the Menti survey, roundtables and group discussions, education emerged as one of the most frequently proposed solutions. Participants called for:

- more fashion, textile and craft education in schools;
- greater transparency about production processes and supply chains;
- increased awareness of environmental and social impacts;
- a better understanding of craftsmanship and garment-making.

The Influential Role of Social Media and Storytelling

While social media was often identified as a driver of consumption pressure and trend cycles, participants also viewed it as a powerful tool for positive change. They suggested that influencers and content creators could help educate audiences about production processes, craftsmanship, sustainability and responsible fashion practices.

Storytelling, behind-the-scenes content, documentaries and creative digital campaigns were repeatedly highlighted as effective ways to engage young people and increase appreciation for craft and fair fashion.

Shared Responsibility for Transforming Fashion

Participants consistently emphasised that responsibility for change should be shared among multiple actors. Fashion brands, producers, influencers, designers, consumers and educational institutions were all seen as having important roles to play.

Rather than placing responsibility solely on individual consumers, participants recognised the need for systemic changes within the industry alongside shifts in consumer behaviour.



Vision for the Future: Sustainable, Inclusive, Creative and Authentic

Despite concerns about fast fashion, microtrends and overconsumption, the overall outlook was optimistic. Pupils envisioned a future fashion industry that is:

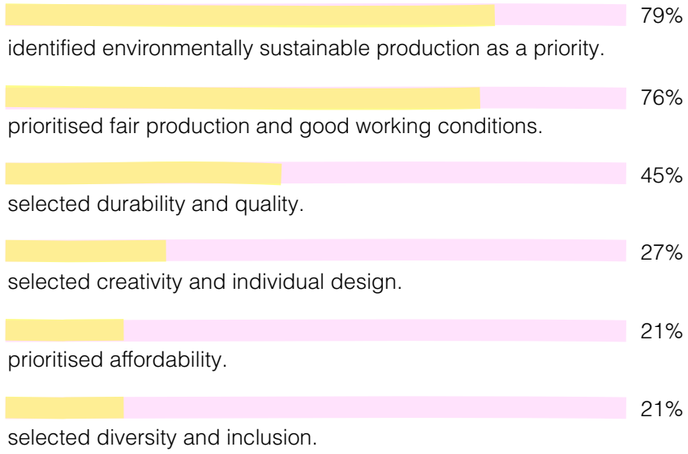
- sustainable and environmentally responsible;
- fair and ethical for workers;
- inclusive and diverse;
- durable and focused on quality;
- creative and supportive of individual expression;
- connected to both technological innovation and traditional craftsmanship.

Young people expressed a desire for a fashion culture that prioritises authenticity, confidence and self-expression over conformity and constant consumption.

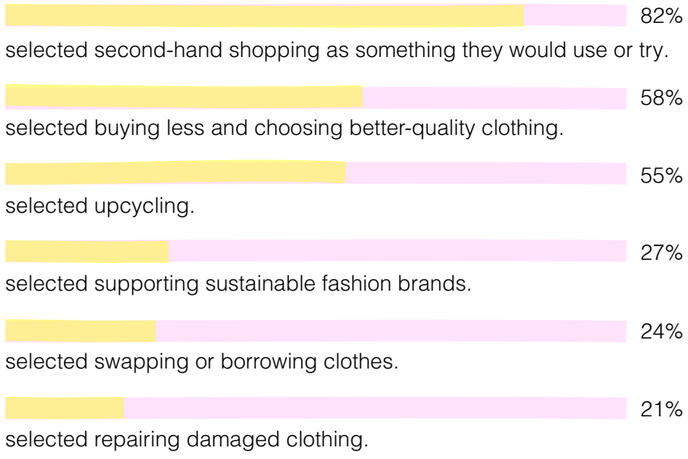
The conference activities reveal a generation that is both confronted by and critically engaged with the challenges facing the fashion industry and eager to contribute to change. Participants demonstrated awareness of sustainability and social justice issues, but also acknowledged the continuing influence of aesthetics, trends and social pressures on their behaviour. Across the discussions, education, transparency, storytelling and youth participation emerged as important pathways towards a fashion future that is more ethical, inclusive, creative and sustainable.

5. Final-Day Survey: Outcomes Across the Residency

The final survey showed that sustainability, fairness and quality were central to the participants' vision for the future of fashion:



The survey also showed that participants could identify concrete ways of making their own relationship with fashion more sustainable:



The responses concerning garment workers were particularly consistent. All 33 participants stated that the people producing clothing should be treated fairly, work under safe and humane conditions, or receive adequate pay. Several responses also referred to appropriate working hours, protection from hazardous substances, equality and the ability to live without poverty.

In the open reflections, participants described gaining knowledge about garment production, working conditions, materials, overconsumption and the value of clothing. Several expressed intentions to buy fewer new clothes, pay more attention to production conditions, shop second-hand or continue upcycling.

"I realised that clothing should be valued much more and that I have more influence than I thought."

"I want to buy fewer new clothes, pay more attention to what I buy and remember that we can all contribute to a more sustainable fashion industry."

"I realised how much I enjoy upcycling and that I would like to continue doing it instead of always buying something new."

Practical Skills and Creative Confidence

Practical learning was one of the strongest outcomes reported on the final day. Participants referred to learning or developing skills including sewing, knitting, embroidery, crochet, material identification and upcycling. At least 13 of the 33 respondents explicitly mentioned a practical or craft-based skill when describing what they had learned.

The Wool Wonders Day and the eBay Upcycling Workshop were the most frequently named programme highlights. 15 participants referred to Wool Wonders or the techniques explored there among their favourite experiences, while 13 specifically named the eBay workshop.

Participants particularly valued the opportunity to experiment, make their own creative decisions and produce something tangible:

“I realised how much I enjoy upcycling and design, and that with professionals by my side I could actually bring my ideas to life.”

“I love the bag I made, and I am going to wear it.”

“It was very cool because I could decide for myself what I wanted to make, and now I have my own piece.”

These responses demonstrate a sense of creative self-efficacy. The participants did not only receive information about sustainable fashion; they experienced themselves as makers and designers capable of transforming existing materials and extending the life of clothing.

Personal and Social Outcomes

The final survey also indicated personal and social impact. Participants consistently connected clothing that reflects their identity with comfort, happiness and greater self-confidence. One participant described learning that they did not need to change their personality for others, showing how the programme connected fashion with identity and self-acceptance.

The social experience of the residency was another recurring theme. Meeting new people, communicating across previously unfamiliar groups and forming friendships were repeatedly described as highlights:

“Although we did not know each other before, we communicated openly and quickly became very close.”

“What I liked most was meeting other people and making new friends.”

Overall satisfaction was exceptionally high. All 33 respondents said they would recommend participation to their friends, with 94% selecting “definitely” and the remaining 6% selecting “probably”.

5.3 Conclusion: From Awareness to Agency

Read together, the conference-day material and final-day survey suggest a development from existing awareness towards deeper understanding, practical engagement and a stronger sense of personal agency. This should be understood as an indicative progression across the learning journey rather than a measured pre- and post-programme change.

The opening-day responses showed that participants already had considerable awareness of the environmental and social problems associated with fashion. This existing foundation was partly grounded in the Generation Zukunft school workshops completed before the trip. At the same time, knowledge of supply chains remained incomplete, style and appearance continued to shape purchasing decisions, and social media, trends and peer expectations influenced fashion choices. The conference addressed these areas through expert contributions, discussions and collaborative reflection.

The workshops, visits and exchanges during the remainder of the residency gave participants opportunities to explore these topics through direct experience. By the final day, they were able to describe production conditions and workers' rights in greater detail, connect sustainability with craftsmanship and material knowledge, and identify practical actions such as second-hand shopping, upcycling, repairing and buying fewer, higher-quality garments.

A particularly important development was the connection between sustainability and practical experience. On the opening day, participants identified education, transparency and craft workshops as important drivers of change. During the following days, they experienced these approaches directly. They learned craft techniques, worked with different materials and transformed existing garments into individual pieces. Their final reflections show that these experiences made the value of craftsmanship and the possibilities of reuse more tangible.

Participants' understanding of fashion also became broader and more differentiated. While the opening-day findings highlighted the importance of appearance, trends and social communication, the final reflections described fashion in relation to production, labour rights, materials, politics, psychology and environmental responsibility:

"I understood that fashion is not only about trends and beautiful clothes, but also about politics, philosophy and psychology."

"I learned how important it is to pay attention to how our clothes are made, and I also learned a lot about fabrics."

Within the limits of the available evidence, the findings support a progression from prior knowledge to deeper understanding and from understanding to practical engagement. Participants moved from recognising the challenges facing the fashion industry to experiencing alternatives and identifying ways in which they could contribute to a fairer, more sustainable and more inclusive fashion future.

"What I am taking into everyday life is to shop more sustainably and make more conscious choices—not buying four pairs of trousers simply because they are fashionable, but choosing pieces I know I will wear for a long time."

Jonathan, *pupil*

Looking Forward

"For the future, I would like fashion to become more sustainable: for us to throw away less, make better use of what already exists and live more consciously."

Jonathan, *pupil*



6.1 Turning Findings into Next Steps

The 2025 findings provide a basis for setting specific priorities for programme development and evaluation.

Deepen supply-chain literacy.

Among those who answered the relevant Menti item, 76% reported only partial knowledge of where their clothing came from. Future workshops should place greater emphasis on tracing production stages and identifying credible sources of information.

Strengthen repair as an accessible practice.

Repair was selected by 7 of 33 final-day respondents (21%), below second-hand shopping and upcycling. Future sessions should make basic repair more visible, practical and easy to repeat at home.

Protect hands-on formats.

Wool Wonders and the eBay Upcycling Workshop were the most frequently named programme highlights. Practical making should therefore remain central to the residency and conference pathway.

Extend career orientation.

The current evidence documents encounters with professionals but does not establish whether participants' knowledge of career routes or access to networks increased. Future surveys should measure these outcomes directly.

Introduce follow-up evaluation.

A brief survey after three or six months could assess whether practical skills, intentions, professional contacts and sustainable practices were sustained beyond the immediate programme setting.

"Before buying something, I want to ask myself: Do I really need this, or is there something in my wardrobe that I no longer wear and could transform through sewing, mending or embroidery?"

Millie, *pupil*



6.2 Digital Expansion and Future Reach

In May 2026, Fashion Council Germany launched the free five-part series **Generation Zukunft**: Fashion & Impact on the „re.fashion Academy“. Available in German and English, it adapts the existing curriculum for independent digital learning. The modules combine explanatory texts, videos, exercises, reflection questions and quizzes. Young people can work through the material at their own pace, while educators can use complete modules or select individual elements for their lessons.

Interviews with professionals connect each topic to current industry practice. Rather than repeating the workshop content, these contributions show how environmental, social and cultural questions are addressed in different areas of fashion.

The „Fashion & Impact“ e-learning series turns the Generation Zukunft curriculum into a resource that remains available beyond individual workshops, schools and project periods.

Module	Focus	Interview Perspective
Fashion & The Planet	The lifecycle of clothing, resource use, pollution, textile waste, circular approaches and greenwashing.	Journalist Carmen Maiwald discusses how environmental claims can be investigated and assessed.
Fashion & The People	Supply chains, wages, labour rights, workplace safety and responsibility within production.	Emma Håkansson of Collective Fashion Justice connects working conditions with questions of animal welfare and environmental responsibility.
Fashion & Your Future	Creative, technical, commercial and sustainability-related careers in fashion.	Julia Ballardt and Nico Verhaegen of Milk of Lime offer insights into design education, material research and the development of an independent label.
Fashion & You	Consumption, advertising, social media, peer influence and fashion psychology.	Stefan Brunner examines how clothing choices are shaped by identity, social behaviour and external influences.
Fashion & Identity	Representation, body norms, age, gender, disability and cultural identity.	Model Anna von Rüden reflects on age diversity, changing beauty standards and visibility within the industry.

“I want to shop more sustainably and make more conscious choices.”

Jonathan, *pupil*

Individual modules can also support preparation for workshops or continue discussions after a school visit. For teachers and youth organisations, the series offers material that can be integrated into their own educational settings without requiring the full programme to be delivered on site.

Its future contribution will depend on how actively it is distributed and connected to the wider learning pathway. Open access can reduce geographical and institutional barriers, but availability alone does not ensure participation, particularly among the young people the programme intends to reach. Cooperation with schools and youth organisations will therefore remain important.

Future evaluation should record registrations, module completion and participant feedback. Where possible, it should also examine whether users come through participating schools, other educational settings or independent access. These data would make it possible to assess whether the series extends the programme's reach and supports learning beyond the classroom. Until such evidence is available, the e-learning series represents an important expansion of the programme's educational infrastructure and a basis for future impact.

Scan the QR code
to discover Generation Zukunft
– Fashion & Impact on
the re.Fashion Academy.

6.3 The 2026 Edition: Full Circle

Connecting Fashion Trends with Circular Practice

Full Circle explores how recurring fashion trends can support reuse, resale, repair and upcycling. Returning styles can renew the appeal of existing garments, but also stimulate new production and consumption. The programme examines this tension through industry perspectives and creative practice.

This focus builds on the 2025 evaluation: style and appearance led respondents' reported purchasing priorities, while group discussions highlighted pressures associated with microtrends and social media. In the final-day survey, 27 of 33 respondents (82%) selected second-hand shopping and 18 (55%) upcycling as practices they could imagine using or trying. Together, these findings suggest an opportunity to connect aesthetic interests with practical alternatives to buying new. They indicate willingness to engage rather than sustained behavioural change.





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Rethinking Taste and the Value of Clothing

The return of earlier styles provides a starting point for examining how tastes are shaped and why garments acquire, lose and regain value. Clothing previously dismissed as outdated can become material for experimentation through styling, repair or alteration.

This approach also responds to the 2025 reflections on fashion as a source of identity and confidence, alongside concerns about judgement and pressure to conform. Exploring inspiration from second-hand finds, cultural references or family wardrobes connects personal expression with the continued use of clothing. Garments' histories and associations become creative resources, bringing memory and changing tastes into discussions of circularity.

Learning through Participation

The 2025 feedback identifies practical making as a particular strength: Wool Wonders and the eBay Upcycling Workshop were the most frequently named programme highlights. This supports a programme design that connects professional discussion with experimentation and opportunities to share outcomes.

Formats include:

- **Dialogue with speakers:** Panels and audience Q&A connect industry perspectives with pupils' questions about sustainability, personal style and creative careers.
- **Practical experimentation:** Workshops and tabletop activities offer opportunities to explore materials, craft techniques and individual ideas.
- **International exchange:** Encounters between pupils from Germany and Scotland create space to compare perspectives and learn together.
- **Sharing creative outcomes:** Presenting workshop outcomes makes pupils' contributions visible within the conference.

Across these formats, clear prompts and sufficient discussion time support participation among pupils with different levels of confidence.

Afterword

One moment that has stayed with me from the early years of our initiatives **Fashion Zukunft** and **Generation Zukunft** took place on the sidelines of our conference at Dumfries House in Scotland. I had been asked to set aside an hour to answer the participating pupils' questions directly and share my experiences — both from my years as Editor-in-Chief of German Vogue and from my current role as Chairwoman of Fashion Council Germany.

Although the conversation began with lighter questions — such as which celebrities' phone numbers I had saved in my mobile phone — the discussion became increasingly specific, complex and thoughtful as the conversation progressed. It was during that hour, at our conference, that I realised we had to do justice to these young people's curiosity.

We have to help them understand that fashion has always been about more than the clothes we wear. It can express who we are, where we feel we belong, what matters to us and how we want to be perceived. At the same time, every garment is shaped by the materials, craftsmanship, labour and systems that bring it into being.

Introducing young people to these different dimensions of fashion is essential — not only for the choices they make as consumers, but also for the future they may help shape as designers, craftspeople, communicators, entrepreneurs or informed and engaged members of society.

What I particularly value about **Generation Zukunft** and **Fashion Zukunft** is the way these initiatives bring knowledge to life. In schools, pupils are encouraged to look beyond trends and images and to ask how clothing is made, whose work goes into it and what happens when it is no longer wanted. At Dumfries House, these questions become tangible: through sewing, weaving, mending and upcycling, participants experience the time, care and attention required to create something new. They discover that sustainability is not merely an abstract concept, but something they can practise, explore and experience with their own hands.

Just as importantly, these initiatives give young people the opportunity to contribute their own perspectives. The conference is not simply another platform for experts to address an audience — it is a place where students can ask challenging questions, exchange ideas with peers from Germany and Scotland, and take part in conversations that help shape the fashion industry.

Their perspectives reveal how closely fashion is connected to identity and self-confidence, but also to social pressure and the desire to belong. A fashion culture fit for the future must take both sides seriously: it must use resources more responsibly and treat people fairly, while also fostering individuality, diversity and personal expression.

This report demonstrates that the insights we share with our partners, The King's Foundation and the PVH Foundation, have set us on the right path. In the early years of **Generation Zukunft** and **Fashion Zukunft**, numerous participants have already broadened their understanding of fashion's environmental and social impact, developed practical skills and discovered ways to extend the life of clothing.

At the same time, we know that awareness does not automatically translate into changed behaviour. Long-term change requires more than a single programme or a one-off experience — it requires accessible educational opportunities, hands-on engagement with craftsmanship and sustained dialogue. And it requires structures that ensure young people's perspectives are heard beyond the classroom.

By introducing young people to both the heritage of craftsmanship and the debates shaping the fashion industry today, **Generation Zukunft** and **Fashion Zukunft** open up possibilities that may previously have seemed out of reach.

I hope we will continue this work with curiosity, openness and ambition. Because together, we can shape a future for fashion in which more young people can recognise themselves, find their own voices and have the opportunity to actively influence what comes next.

Christiane Arp
Chairwoman, Fashion Council Germany

Evaluation Framework, Data Collection and Limitations

The evaluation is exploratory, contribution-oriented and focused on short-term outcomes. Its findings should be read in relation to the programme setting, the available samples and the limits of the research design.

Scope and Evidence Framework

The report covers the development, scale and reach of Generation Zukunft and Fashion Zukunft from 2019 to 2026. The detailed analysis of learning and experience focuses on the 2025 conference and residency because this edition provides the most complete combination of quantitative and qualitative participant-level material available for this report. Editions 1 and 2 already included voluntary assessment and feedback activities; however, the supplied reportings do not provide sufficiently complete instruments, absolute response bases or comparable item-level data to construct a historical outcome baseline.

The evaluation distinguishes four levels of evidence: reach and equitable access; delivered activities and participation; short-term outcomes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, confidence and intentions; and longer-term impact in sustained behaviour, educational progression, professional access and equitable participation. The current material supports claims about the first three levels. It does not yet demonstrate sustained long-term impact.

The two initiatives are understood as connected but distinct contributors. Generation Zukunft creates school-based and digital access to knowledge; Fashion Zukunft and the Scotland residency deepen this learning through practical work, cultural exchange and professional encounters. Because participants moved through these formats sequentially and no comparison design was used, observed outcomes cannot be attributed to one initiative in isolation.

Data Sources

Programme monitoring evidence includes the Edition 1 reporting (2022/23), the Edition 2 reporting (2023/24) and the 2025 overall programme evaluation covering Editions 1–3 and the planned Edition 4. These sources document schools, classes, reported participation contacts, assessment uptake, Hub participants and residency places. The detailed 2025 outcome evidence was collected during the Scotland residency through anonymous Menti responses, keynote Post-its, roundtable discussions, the Youth Future Canvas, the Fashion & Me Reflection Wall and a final-day survey completed by 33 of 48 pupils, equivalent to a response rate of approximately 69%.

Quotation note: Additional qualitative evidence was drawn from recorded interviews with pupils, accompanying teachers and conference speakers. Quotations were selected for their thematic relevance, translated from German where necessary and lightly edited for clarity without altering their meaning. As interviewees were not selected through a systematic sampling process, their accounts illustrate individual experiences and should not be treated as representative of the full cohort.

Interpretive Approach

Quantitative findings are reported descriptively as counts or percentages. Response bases must be stated for each question, and multiple-response items must be identified. Conference-day and final-day data are anonymous and are not treated as a matched pre- and post-test. Percentage differences therefore describe the responses collected at each moment; they do not demonstrate individual change or causality.

Qualitative material is used to identify recurring themes, tensions and participant perspectives across several formats. Cross-source comparison strengthens the interpretation when similar patterns appear in surveys, group outputs and reflections, but it does not establish statistical prevalence. Synthesised statements must be distinguished from verbatim quotations, and the coding framework should be documented before publication.

The equity analysis distinguishes between access mechanisms and demonstrated equity outcomes. Cost support, school-based delivery, alternative formats and accompaniment show how barriers were reduced. Without aggregated information on who applied, progressed, participated and benefited, however, the report cannot demonstrate that outcomes were distributed equally across social groups.

Methodological Limitations

- The 2025 residency cohort was selected through an assessment and motivation process. Findings describe this participating group and should not be generalised to every young person reached by Generation Zukunft.
- The final-day survey was completed by 33 of 48 pupils (approximately 69%). Non-respondents may have had different experiences, and no non-response analysis is currently available.
- Anonymous conference-day responses, group outputs and final-day surveys cannot be linked at individual level. The evaluation is therefore not a matched pre- and post-test and cannot measure individual change over time.
- Question-level response bases are incomplete and may vary. Several questions appear to permit multiple selections, so percentages may not sum to 100% and must not be compared without verified denominators.
- Most outcomes are self-reported immediately after an intensive programme. Social desirability, recall, enthusiasm at the end of the residency and limited awareness of subconscious influences may affect responses.
- Group discussions can amplify conformity and in-group bias. Sharing personal opinions with unfamiliar peers may also have limited dissent, disclosure and the range of perspectives recorded.
- Moderators sometimes initiated discussion or provided prompts. Because some data collection was embedded within learning activities, facilitation may have influenced both the experience and the responses used to evaluate it.
- The qualitative findings currently rely partly on editorial synthesis. Until a documented coding framework, source transcripts and independent checks are available, thematic patterns should not be presented as precise frequencies.
- No comparison group, counterfactual or long-term follow-up is available. The findings support claims of programme contribution to short-term outcomes, not causal attribution or sustained behavioural and career impact.
- The available dataset does not contain sufficient anonymised, aggregated indicators to assess whether access, progression and outcomes were distributed equitably. Claims about equal opportunity should therefore remain limited to documented barrier-reduction mechanisms.

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