



VETRINE

Vocational Education & Training
towards re-inventing apparel procedures

"ENTRE-FASHION" MANUAL

Recommendations for Sustainability Education



Co-funded by
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Vocational Education & Training
towards re-inventing apparel procedures

Best practices to develop sustainability training in the T&C industry

(The Entre-Fashion Manual)

March 2026

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Executive Summary

The **VETRINE** project contributes to the transformation of the textile and apparel sector by fostering **sustainability, innovation, and stronger connections between education and industry.**

Within this framework, this manual brings together the results developed under **Work Package 4, integrating the Green VETRINE Capacity Building Programme (CBP)** and the Entre-Fashion process into a coherent and structured learning model. This integrated approach demonstrates how sustainability education can move beyond theoretical instruction and be effectively translated into practice through project-based learning, mentoring, and real-world product development.

The **methodology presented in this manual highlights the importance of combining conceptual knowledge with hands-on experimentation.** By engaging learners in iterative development processes, decision-making under constraints, and continuous reflection, the approach supports the development of sustainability-driven and market-aware professionals.

The **implementation across different partner countries further demonstrates the adaptability of the methodology to diverse educational contexts,** institutional settings, and learner profiles. **This reinforces the positioning of VETRINE as a reference initiative in the field of sustainable fashion education,** offering a model that can be transferred and applied beyond the scope of the project.

As such, this manual is designed as a **practical and actionable reference for institutions, educators, and professionals** seeking to strengthen sustainability education within the textile and apparel sector. It provides both a conceptual framework and concrete guidance for implementation, grounded in real experiences and validated through practice.

How to Use This Manual

This manual is designed as a practical reference to support the implementation of sustainability-oriented fashion education using the Entre-Fashion methodology.

It can be used by different stakeholders depending on their role in the learning process. The content is structured to provide both a conceptual understanding of the methodology and practical guidance for its application.

Readers are encouraged to use this manual not only as a source of information, but as a working tool to design, adapt, and implement learning experiences that integrate sustainability, creativity, and real-world constraints.

Who Is This Manual For?

for VET providers

for mentors

for sustainability trainers

for fashion schools

for replication initiatives

Table 1: Objectives of this manual

Objective	Description
Conceptual and methodological framework	To describe the conceptual and methodological framework supporting the Entre-Fashion process
Integrated learning approach	To explain how training, mentoring, and monitoring tools were combined to support learner development
Stakeholder experiences	To document the experiences and reflections of learners, mentors, and participating organisations
Evaluation and insights	To identify key challenges, good practices, and lessons learned throughout the implementation of the process
Future application	To provide recommendations that may support the replication or adaptation of similar initiatives in other educational and training environments

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1. Introduction and Objectives

The textile and apparel sector is currently undergoing a profound transformation driven by environmental challenges, regulatory developments, technological innovation, and changing consumer expectations. Increasing pressure to reduce environmental impacts, improve transparency across supply chains, and adopt more circular production models is reshaping how fashion products are designed, produced, and consumed.

Within this evolving context, **the development of new competences has become essential. Designers, technicians, and future entrepreneurs in the textile and apparel industry are increasingly expected to combine creative and technical skills with a deeper understanding of sustainability principles, responsible material selection, and environmentally conscious production processes.** This shift reflects the growing need for professionals who are capable not only of designing products, but also of understanding their broader environmental and systemic implications.

The VETRINE project was developed in response to these challenges, aiming to strengthen cooperation between vocational education and training (VET) providers, higher education institutions, industry actors, and innovation ecosystems within the textile and apparel sector. By promoting collaboration between these stakeholders, the project supports the development of new skills, methodologies, and approaches aligned with the sustainability transition of the industry.

The activities implemented under **WP4 encourage learners to move beyond theoretical knowledge and actively engage with the real challenges** involved in designing and developing sustainable apparel products.

A central component of this work package is the **Entre-Fashion process**, a learning journey designed to simulate the development of sustainable fashion items while integrating mentoring support, structured monitoring, and continuous reflection on sustainability, market feasibility, and innovation. This manual **presents the methodology implemented within WP4, the experience gathered throughout the Entre-Fashion process, and the key lessons learned during its execution.**

More specifically, the manual aims to:

- ❖ **provide a structured and comprehensive overview of the Entre-Fashion methodology and its underlying learning model;**
- ❖ **support the understanding and practical application of the methodology in different educational and training environments;**
- ❖ **enable educators, mentors, and institutions to adapt and implement the approach according to their specific contexts;**
- ❖ **highlight key lessons learned and insights derived from implementation across different countries;**

- ❖ contribute to strengthening sustainability-oriented competences within the textile and apparel sector;
- ❖ exploring constraints and limitations;
- ❖ making informed and context-based decisions;
- ❖ adapting concepts in response to real conditions;
- ❖ reflecting on trade-offs between sustainability, feasibility, and creativity.

2. The Green VETRINE Capacity Building Programme (CBP)

Image 1: The Green VETRINE course visual element



2.1. Rationale and Objectives

The **transition towards a more sustainable and responsible fashion system requires professionals capable of integrating environmental awareness, technical knowledge, and entrepreneurial thinking** into the development of apparel products.

These developments highlight the need for education and training programmes that equip learners with the competences required to understand and address sustainability challenges in a practical and informed way.

However, **several studies and sectoral consultations have pointed to gaps in**

sustainability-related knowledge and skills among future professionals entering the fashion industry.

The Green VETRINE Capacity Building Programme (CBP) was developed to address these needs by providing learners, educators, and professionals with structured learning resources focused on sustainable apparel development. The programme was designed to strengthen knowledge related to sustainability in fashion while also encouraging a more holistic understanding of product development, including environmental, social, and economic considerations.

The CBP therefore serves as a foundational element of the VETRINE methodology, supporting learners in developing the competences necessary to engage with sustainability challenges throughout the lifecycle of apparel products.

2.2. Structure of the Capacity Building Programme

The Green VETRINE Capacity Building Programme (CBP) was designed as a structured educational resource covering key aspects of sustainable fashion development. **The programme was developed in multiple languages to ensure accessibility for learners across the different partner countries involved in the VETRINE project.** This multilingual approach supports the use of the materials in a variety of educational contexts, including vocational training institutions, universities, and professional development environments.

2.3. Linking the CBP to the Entre-Fashion Process

While the Green VETRINE Capacity Building Programme (CBP) provides the theoretical and conceptual foundation for sustainable fashion development, **the Entre-Fashion process was designed to allow learners to apply this knowledge in practice.** The CBP equips learners with the basic knowledge needed to understand sustainability challenges and opportunities in the fashion industry. **Building on this knowledge, the Entre-Fashion process invites participants to develop their own apparel concepts while considering sustainability principles, material selection, product functionality, and potential market positioning.**

This transition from learning to experimentation represents a key element of the VETRINE approach. By combining structured training with a practical product development process, learners are encouraged to move beyond theoretical understanding and engage directly with the decisions and trade-offs involved in sustainable design.

3. The Entre-Fashion Process

“The Entre-Fashion Development Journey”

1. Sustainability Training (CBP)

2. Concept Definition

3. Mentor Matching

4. Material Research

5. Prototype Development

6. Market & Feasibility Reflection

7. Testing & Iteration

8. Final Pitch & Public Evaluation

9. Reflection & Documentation

3.1. Purpose of the Entre-Fashion Process

The Entre-Fashion process was developed within the VETRINE project as **a practical learning experience designed to complement the knowledge acquired through the Green VETRINE Capacity Building Programme (CBP)**. While the CBP provides the theoretical and conceptual foundations related to sustainable apparel production, **the Entre-Fashion process allows learners to apply this knowledge through a structured product development journey (above).**

The initiative was conceived as an eight-month simulation of sustainable fashion development, during which learners were encouraged to design and develop an apparel concept while considering environmental, social, and economic aspects. **This simulation aimed to reproduce, in an educational context, several of the steps typically involved in the development of fashion products.** In addition to technical and environmental considerations, the Entre-Fashion process also promotes entrepreneurial thinking.

Image 3: Students with their mentor in Bulgaria



The Entre-Fashion process was designed as a collaborative learning experience involving several actors from both the education and industry environments.

VET learners

Learners participating in the process are the central actors of the initiative. They are responsible for developing sustainable fashion concepts and progressively transforming their ideas into prototypes or final products.

Mentors

Mentors provide technical and strategic guidance throughout the process. Their role is to support learners in refining their ideas, addressing technical challenges, and making informed decisions related to materials, construction, sustainability, and feasibility.

Market-Linked Organizations (MLOs)

Market-linked organizations play an important role in connecting the learning process with industry perspectives. These organizations contribute knowledge related to production realities, market expectations, and sustainability practices within the sector.

VET providers and Project Partners

Education institutions and project partners support the implementation of the process by coordinating learners, facilitating mentoring interactions, and ensuring the overall coherence of the learning experience.

This multi-actor structure reflects the VETRINE project's ambition to strengthen collaboration between education providers and industry actors to better prepare learners for the evolving challenges of the textile and apparel sector.

3.2. Structured Mentoring Approach

A key element of the Entre-Fashion process is the **structured mentoring approach** developed within the project. Rather than relying solely on independent project work, **learners are supported by mentors** who provide guidance and feedback at key moments throughout the development process.

Table 2: aims of the mentoring process

The mentoring process aims to
Support learners in refining their product concepts
Encourage reflection on sustainability and material choices
Assist in addressing technical challenges during product development
Provide feedback on feasibility and market positioning

Mentoring interactions are organized through **short online meetings and checkpoints during the development process**. These moments of interaction allow learners to discuss their progress, clarify questions, and receive feedback that helps guide the next steps of their projects.

3.3. Phases of the Entre-Fashion Process

The Entre-Fashion process follows a structured methodology divided into several phases. Each phase focuses on specific aspects of sustainable product development and encourages learners to progressively refine their ideas.

Phase 0 - Contest Launch and Preparation

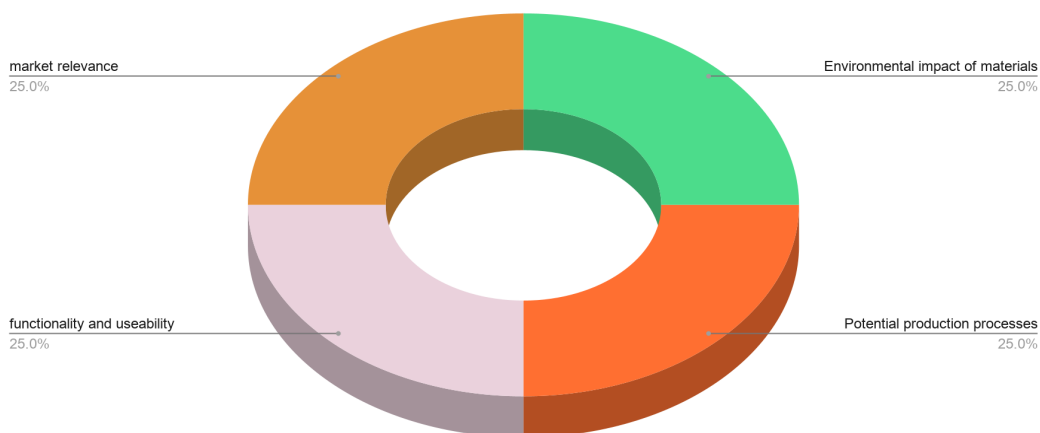
Before the beginning of the development process, the initiative is launched through a call for participation addressed to learners. During this stage, evaluation criteria are defined, applications are received, and learners are matched with mentors. This preparation stage also ensures that participants are familiar with the objectives of the process and the expectations regarding sustainability, innovation, and product development.

Phase 1 - Concept and Initial Validation

During the first phase of the development process, learners define the concept of their apparel product. This stage involves exploring design ideas, identifying potential materials, and establishing initial sustainability objectives. A kick-off meeting between the learner and the mentor provides an opportunity to discuss the concept and validate the initial direction of the project.

Image 4: Key considerations chart

Key considerations



Phase 2 - Product Development

The second phase focuses on the practical development of the apparel concept. Learners begin to translate their ideas into tangible prototypes, testing materials, construction techniques, and design details.

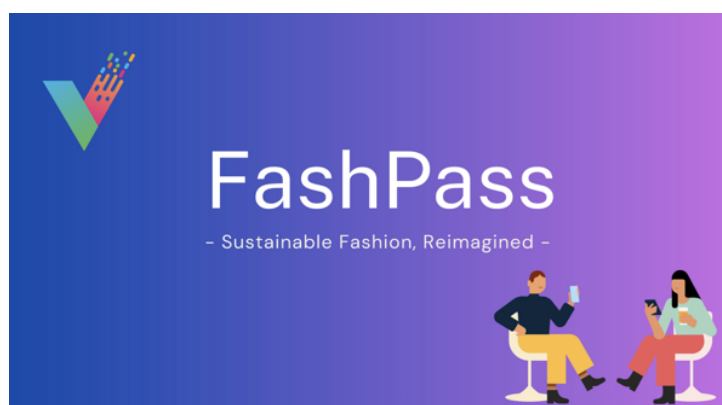
This stage often involves experimentation and adjustments, as learners encounter practical challenges related to materials, pattern construction, or production feasibility. Mentors provide feedback and support to help participants refine their prototypes while maintaining alignment with sustainability objectives.

Phase 3 - Business and Market Strategy

In addition to technical and environmental aspects, learners are encouraged to consider the market dimension of their product. During this phase, participants reflect on branding, pricing strategies, and potential positioning of their product in the market. The objective of this phase is to introduce learners to entrepreneurial thinking and to encourage them to consider how sustainable fashion products can create value for consumers while maintaining responsible production practices.

Phase 4 - Final Pitch and Evaluation

The final stage of the Entre-Fashion process focuses on the presentation and evaluation of the developed products. Learners prepare a final presentation explaining their concept, design decisions, sustainability strategies, and potential market positioning. The evaluation process simulates real market validation dynamics, a **public voting process (Fash Pass)** was integrated into the final evaluation stage. Participants presented their projects through digital channels and public showcases, allowing external audiences to interact with and evaluate the developed concepts. **This approach encouraged learners to communicate sustainability value propositions in a more accessible and market-oriented way while also increasing visibility and stakeholder engagement within the VETRINE ecosystem.**



4. Monitoring the Learning Journey

4.1. Purpose of the Monitoring Approach

The Entre-Fashion process was designed not only as a learning experience but also as a structured methodology allowing partners to observe, document, and analyze the progress of learners throughout the development of their projects.

To ensure consistency across the different partner countries involved in the VETRINE project, a **monitoring framework was developed to accompany the implementation of the Entre-Fashion process**. This framework allowed project partners to track the evolution of the learners' work, gather feedback from mentors, and identify emerging challenges and best practices.

Monitoring also played an important role in ensuring that the learning process remained aligned with the objectives of the Green VETRINE CBP.

4.2. The Monitoring Tool

To support the monitoring process, **a dedicated monitoring tool was developed within the project (see <https://vetrine-monitoringtool.eu>)**. This tool allowed partners to collect structured information about the progress of the learners and the mentoring interactions taking place during the Entre-Fashion process.

The monitoring tool was designed to capture different types of information, including: the stage of development reached by the learner; feedback from mentors on the evolution of the project; challenges related to materials, sustainability considerations, or technical aspects; reflections from learners regarding their learning experience.

The use of a shared monitoring tool across partner countries helped ensure that information was collected in a consistent and comparable way. This also allowed the project consortium to obtain a broader overview of how the Entre-Fashion methodology was implemented in different educational and geographical contexts.

The monitoring tool therefore played an important role in documenting the implementation of the process and supporting the preparation of this manual.

4.3. Mentor Feedback and Guidance

Mentors played a central role in supporting learners throughout the Entre-Fashion process. Their involvement provided participants with access to professional knowledge and industry perspectives that helped strengthen the relevance and feasibility of the projects developed.

During the mentoring interactions, mentors provided guidance on several aspects of the development process, including material selection and sustainability considerations, production construction and design feasibility, alignment between design ideas and production realities, and the communication of the concept and value of the product.

Mentors also contributed to the process by **sharing observations regarding the progress of the learners, the challenges encountered, and the solutions explored during the development of the projects**. This exchange between learners and mentors helped create a dynamic learning environment in which ideas could be tested, refined, and adapted throughout the development process.

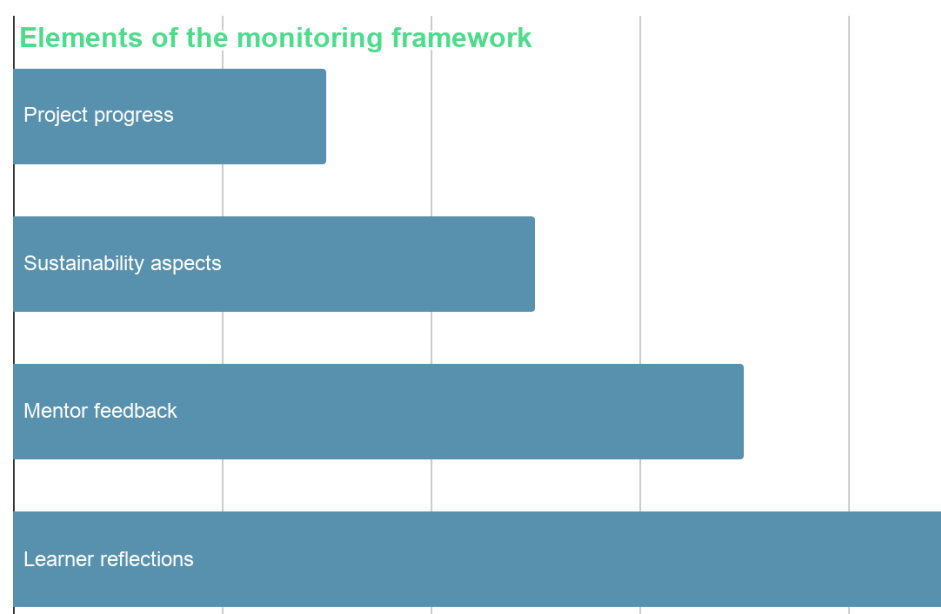
4.4. Learning Reflections from Participants

In addition to mentor feedback, **learners were encouraged to reflect on their own learning journey during the Entre-Fashion process.** Through short reports or reflective inputs, participants shared their experiences regarding the development of their projects and the challenges encountered.

Among the themes frequently mentioned in learner reflections were the importance of material research and experimentation; the complexity of balancing sustainability goals with technical feasibility; the role of mentoring in refining design ideas; the challenges of integrating sustainability considerations into product development.

Collecting these reflections allows the project consortium to better understand the learning outcomes of the initiative and to identify aspects that may be improved in future programmes.

Table 3: Process elements of the monitoring framework



4.5. Contribution of Monitoring to the Manual

The information collected through the monitoring process has played a key role in the preparation of this manual. By **analysing the feedback gathered from learners, mentors, and project partners, it has been possible to identify patterns, challenges, and best practices emerging from the Entre-Fashion experience.**

These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how sustainability education can be effectively integrated into fashion training programmes. They also provide practical guidance for educators, training providers, and organisations interested in implementing similar initiatives in the future.

The monitoring framework therefore represents an essential component of the VETRINE methodology, ensuring that the learning experience is not only implemented but

also documented and analysed in a structured way.

5. Implementation Across Partner Countries

5.1 Organization of the Entre-Fashion Process

The Entre-Fashion process was implemented across the four partner countries participating in the VETRINE project with the objective of testing and applying the methodology in different educational and institutional contexts.

Each partner organisation was responsible for coordinating the implementation of the process within its national context. This included identifying participating learners, engaging mentors and industry representatives, and ensuring that the different phases of the process were carried out in alignment with the methodology defined within the project.

The implementation followed a shared framework adopted by all partners, ensuring coherence in the learning experience and enabling the collection of comparable insights across countries. This common structure was essential to maintain consistency in how the methodology was applied, particularly in relation to key phases such as concept development, mentoring, product development, and validation.

At the same time, partners were encouraged to adapt specific aspects of the implementation to their local contexts. These adaptations took into account differences in educational systems, institutional partnerships, learner profiles, and access to industry networks.

This balance between a shared methodological framework and contextual adaptation allowed the Entre-Fashion process to be implemented effectively across diverse environments, while preserving its core structure, objectives, and learning logic.

5.1 Recruitment and Participant Engagement

Recruitment proved to be a key factor in the success of the implementation process across all partner countries.

The experience showed that recruitment is not a neutral or administrative step, but a critical phase that directly influences participation, engagement, and overall outcomes. Across different contexts, several common patterns were observed:

- ❖ **recruitment processes often take longer than initially expected;**
- ❖ **learner commitment can be significantly affected by academic workload and competing responsibilities;**
- ❖ **engagement tends to decrease over time in the absence of structured follow-up mechanisms.**
- ❖ **initiating recruitment at least 1–2 months before the start of implementation;**
- ❖ **clearly communicating expectations in terms of workload, duration,**

- and level of commitment required;
- ❖ involving teachers, trainers, or institutional partners in the selection and engagement of participants;
- ❖ aligning implementation timelines with academic calendars, avoiding periods such as examinations or institutional breaks.

5.3 Engagement with Industry and Mentors

A central element of the Entre-Fashion process is the connection between education and industry.

To support this objective, project partners actively involved professionals from the textile and apparel sector as mentors throughout the implementation of the initiative.

Mentors were selected based on their professional experience and their willingness to guide learners during the development of their projects. Their role was to provide practical insights, technical guidance, and targeted feedback to support participants in refining their ideas and improving the feasibility of their designs. In addition to individual mentors, several market-linked organisations and companies were involved in supporting the initiative. Their participation strengthened the connection between the educational environment and the realities of the textile and fashion industry, contributing to a more applied and context-aware learning experience.

The involvement of industry actors also enriched the learning process by exposing participants to real-world considerations related to production processes, sustainability practices, and market expectations. This interaction played a key role in helping learners understand how sustainability decisions are shaped by practical constraints and industry dynamics.

Mentoring emerged as one of the most impactful components of the Entre-Fashion methodology. Across all implementations, it contributed to:

- ❖ improving the feasibility of project ideas;
- ❖ supporting informed and context-based decision-making;
- ❖ connecting learner projects to real-world conditions and industry expectations.

At the same time, the experience demonstrated that mentoring is most effective when it is structured and embedded within the overall process. To ensure its effectiveness, the following approaches are recommended:

- ❖ define specific mentoring checkpoints throughout the process (e.g. concept validation, material selection, prototype review, final preparation);
- ❖ match mentors with expertise relevant to the specific focus of each learner project;

- ❖ **ensure regular and continuous interaction between mentors and learners, rather than one-off feedback moments;**
- ❖ **encourage mentors to challenge assumptions, support critical thinking, and guide learners in navigating trade-offs between sustainability, feasibility, and creativity.**

When structured in this way, mentoring becomes not only a support mechanism, but a core learning component that strengthens the connection between knowledge and practice.

6. Country Insights: Lessons Learned from Implementation

6.1 Portugal



Context

The implementation of the Entre-Fashion process in Portugal involved a total of 12 VET learners, slightly below the initial target of 15 participants. Learners were recruited primarily through vocational schools offering fashion-related programmes, supported by

in-person presentations, direct engagement with teachers, and dissemination through social media channels.

Although participation was not formally restricted to students, a strategic decision was made to focus on learners enrolled in fashion-related education and training, as they were considered more likely to engage in a structured, long-term initiative requiring both creative and technical involvement. In addition, all participants were required to have completed the Green VETRINE Capacity Building Programme (CBP), ensuring a common baseline of knowledge. This requirement was successfully fulfilled by all participants.

Despite efforts to reach a broader audience, all participants ultimately came from educational institutions. This suggests that structured learning environments play a key role in facilitating participation in initiatives of this nature, while individuals outside these contexts may face greater barriers to engagement.

The process was implemented in collaboration with industry partners acting as mentors, representing different segments of the textile and apparel value chain. This collaboration enabled learners to connect design development with real industry practices and constraints.

Key Challenges

One of the main challenges identified was the recruitment of participants. Despite multiple dissemination actions, including school presentations and digital communication, it proved difficult to mobilise the expected number of learners for an eight-month extracurricular initiative.

Another important challenge was related to the timing of the implementation. The initial plan foresaw a continuous eight-month development process; however, the start of the initiative coincided with the end of the academic year, when students were focused on final assessments. During the summer period, participation dropped significantly, and engagement had to be reactivated in September through additional dissemination efforts. As a result, the effective development phase took place between September and February, rather than following the initially planned timeline.

Sustaining learner engagement throughout the process also proved challenging. While some participants maintained consistent involvement, others showed irregular participation, particularly in their interaction with mentors. Although the monitoring tool was designed to support regular updates and feedback, its use alone was not sufficient to ensure continuous engagement.

From a technical perspective, learners encountered difficulties related to sourcing sustainable materials, adapting initial concepts to available resources, and dealing with production constraints. These challenges often required significant changes to the original design ideas.

Mentors also identified gaps in transversal competences, particularly in time management, organization, and proactive communication, which affected the overall pace and consistency of the development process.

Solutions and Approaches

To address recruitment challenges, a proactive approach was adopted, combining

direct presentations in educational institutions, closer collaboration with teachers, and targeted communication through social media. Face-to-face interaction proved particularly effective in explaining the objectives and value of the initiative.

Following the summer interruption, additional dissemination actions were carried out to reengage participants and ensure the continuity of the process. This required a flexible approach to implementation and timeline management.

Throughout the development phase, the structured mentoring model played an important role in supporting learners. Interaction between participants and mentors allowed for the validation of ideas, resolution of technical challenges, and refinement of product concepts.

The monitoring tool provided a structured framework to track progress and collect information on learner activities, challenges, and reflections. Although engagement with the tool varied, it contributed to documenting the development process and supporting coordination.

Learners adopted iterative approaches to product development, adapting their concepts based on material availability, technical feasibility, and feedback from mentors. This flexibility proved essential in overcoming constraints and progressing towards viable outcomes.

Key Lessons Learned

The Portuguese experience highlighted that sustainable product development is inherently iterative. Learners were frequently required to adapt their initial ideas due to material limitations, technical constraints, or feasibility considerations, reinforcing the importance of flexibility and problem-solving.

The sourcing of sustainable materials emerged as a critical challenge, influencing both design decisions and final outcomes. Material availability, performance, and suitability often require compromises or redesign of initial concepts.

A key insight relates to the need to balance creativity with feasibility. While learners aimed to develop innovative and expressive solutions, they had to align these ambitions with production realities, available resources, and time constraints.

The experience also reinforced the understanding of sustainability as a systemic concept. Beyond material selection, learners were exposed to broader considerations related to production processes, durability, lifecycle thinking, and responsible practices across the value chain.

Mentor contributions highlighted the importance of aligning design ideas with market realities, including cost, scalability, and consumer expectations. At the same time, the process revealed that mentoring is most effective when supported by active and consistent engagement from participants.

Recommendations

Based on the experience in Portugal, several recommendations can be identified for future implementations.

- ❖ **Recruitment strategies should be initiated earlier and more closely aligned with academic calendars. Stronger integration with educational programmes and active involvement of teachers can significantly improve participation rates.**
- ❖ **Project timelines should be carefully planned to avoid periods of high academic workload or extended breaks, which can disrupt engagement and continuity. Where interruptions are unavoidable, additional follow-up mechanisms should be implemented.**
- ❖ **Engagement mechanisms should be reinforced through more structured interaction, including mandatory checkpoints, clearer expectations, and more active coordination throughout the process.**
- ❖ **Mentoring processes should be further structured, with defined interaction moments and clearer guidelines to support effective collaboration between learners and industry partners.**
- ❖ **It is also important to reinforce the systemic understanding of sustainability, encouraging participants to consider not only materials but also production processes, lifecycle, and market positioning.**
- ❖ **Finally, hands-on and iterative learning approaches should continue to be prioritized, as they proved essential for developing both technical competences and a deeper understanding of sustainable fashion.**

6.2 Spain



Context

The Entre-Fashion part of the VETRINE project matched content, procedures and objectives of the VET's Textile courses that our HEI offers. Sustainability in design has been a key content in our materials, so the Entre-Fashion contest fit well within our teaching and learning methodology and was very well received by our learners, both those within regulated courses and those in Lifelong Learning and upskilling/unemployment courses.

Overall, there were 13 students who took part, all belonging to the regulated courses

because it has proved more difficult to engage people outside standard educational systems, like designers who already have their own ateliers or other stakeholders within the Textile trade. The students were already aware of this optional phase in the project because it was required that they had taken the Green Vitrine Capacity Building Programme (CBP) and successfully completed all the units before enrolling for the EntreFashion part. This requirement helped assure that all the participants started from a common knowledge base and none was at any disadvantage or unaware of the contest requirements and objectives.

The 13 participants have contributed their designs and have counted on the help and guidance of different mentors and teachers, both in person and in online connections to accompany them in the design creation process and in keeping the sustainability and recyclability requirements in mind.

Key Challenges

Considering that the Spanish partner was divided into 2 organizations, we can say that attaining the planned 15 participants was fairly simple for one of the partners and a bit more complicated for the other, but together we were able to produce the 15 expected products for the contest thanks to fluent and regular communication, planning together and flexible approaches to deal with participation issues as they came up.

The different timing used for the completion of the EntreFashion phase could have seemed a drawback at first, but the fact of having an extended period to produce the designs has helped so far. It has allowed us to compensate for unexpected withdrawals on the part of some students that had compromised their participation but later on changed their minds.

Echoing students' feedback during the process, we can say that all were very satisfied with their creations and didn't mention any special difficulties, other than the time and dedication it takes to create a garment. If any, all agreed that to obtain information as regards tech specs, origin, etc. on donated and recycled materials is very difficult to gather, if not impossible.

Also, some of them complained that the Monitoring Tool was too extensive to complete and some sections and questions looked similar and repetitive. But this is an understandable comment considering students' natural dislike to produce written documentation and explaining processes in detail.

Solutions and Approaches

Recruitment challenges were solved as mentioned earlier by constructive communication between AEG and TEXFOR and swift action could be taken to contribute with the 15 designs. As regards the engagement of other learners or participants outside the school domain, we have not thought of a possible solution other than spending more time on publicizing the activity. But we're not sure even more time on this would solve it since it's our impression from what the mentors said that professionals in the Textile field are already very busy building their own brands and running their own businesses to find the time and commitment to have taken the CBP (a requisite) online course first and then to enter the competition phase.

There was no suitable solution to the lack of comprehensive information about origin, production processes, etc. on donated materials. All the fabric cuts came in bulk, so no roll

labels were attached and donated garments were also unidentified. However, when the material was not totally identifiable by touch, the students could always refer to the lab techniques they have learned and analyse the fibers.

The participants benefited from their mentor's assistance and presence and despite a few complaints on the Monitoring Tool it's obvious that this offered a lot of information and insight into the whole design and production process.

Key Lessons Learned

All participants highlighted the importance of doing a lot of research before you start designing anything. It's through research that you can align your initial ideas with the contest requirements and the materials available.

Another important aspect was the focus you must put on the product's use. Several of the designs are aimed at serving the performative arts, like cinema, theatre, opera, while others are mostly thought for private events use.

All in all, aligning the design with its feasibility was also a key lesson obtained, mostly from the mentors' input derived from their better knowledge on market realities and business needs.

As regards material's sources, every September, coinciding with the start of the course, the students all all-Textile specialities run a strong campaign asking fabric providers for leftover cuts and use social media to reclaim second hand clothes and all sort of textile fabrics that have been used for other things or that are left over. In this way, there is never a shortage of materials

It seems that the students that participated in the Entre-Fashion part have already very well internalized the importance of the sustainability requirement when it comes to creating a textile product. The practice of using recycled materials comes naturally to them and they have learned that it is totally possible to create something with a different use in mind than that it had originally been.

Recommendations

Based on our experience, we would recommend establishing less ambitious recruitment goals to complete participation, one must count on the commitment of all participants. Experience and common sense tell us that among 60 people (15 contestants in 4 countries) there is always the likelihood of a certain percentage of them undergoing issues that will prevent them from completing the phase.

In the case of strict KPIs in similar educational projects, we suggest trying to involve a larger number of students than the target number of final projects to account for "dropouts": the number of participants should be flexible and taken more as an ideal rather than as a set goal so that everyone who wants can try to participate.

6.3 Greece



Context

The implementation of the Entre-Fashion process in Greece involved 15 participants, all of whom successfully completed the full process. Participants were selected by the organization after having completed the Green VETRINE Capacity Building Programme (CBP) and having explicitly expressed their interest in continuing to the next stage. This ensured that all participants entered the process with a shared baseline of knowledge on sustainability and circular fashion, as well as a clear personal motivation to further develop their ideas.

The participant group in Greece was diverse in terms of background and experience. Some participants had formal studies related to fashion, design, or creative fields, while others did not yet have academic training in the sector but brought practical experience, personal engagement, and strong interest in sustainable fashion. Importantly, participants were not students of EUROTRAINING, which made the Greek implementation particularly

relevant as an example of outreach beyond the organization's immediate learner base.

The projects developed by Greek participants reflected a broad understanding of sustainability in fashion, combining creativity, material reuse, personal storytelling, and circular thinking. Some concepts were rooted in the upcycling of heritage textiles and emotionally significant materials, while others focused on the reuse of leftover fabrics from previous projects and the transformation of existing resources into new garments. These examples demonstrated that sustainable fashion design can emerge both from technical knowledge and from personal commitment, experimentation, and contextual awareness.

Key Challenges

One of the main challenges in the Greek implementation was the heterogeneity of participant profiles. While this diversity enriched the process, it also meant that participants entered the development phase with different levels of technical knowledge, design maturity, and familiarity with structured product development processes. Some participants were comfortable with garment construction and concept development, whereas others needed more support in translating ideas into feasible and well-documented outcomes.

Another challenge concerned the practical application of sustainability principles. Participants were often motivated by strong creative concepts or personal stories, but they had to learn how to align these with feasible material choices, circular strategies, and realistic production decisions. In several cases, the challenge was not only to design sustainably, but also to clearly justify and communicate why a product could be considered sustainable.

Material-related limitations also emerged as an important issue. The examples provided by Greek participants indicate that access to sustainable fabrics and the local availability of specialized material options remain limited in the Greek context. As a result, participants often relied on already available textiles, deadstock, leftover materials, or existing garments and fabrics, which required flexibility and adaptation throughout the process.

In addition, some participants encountered technical difficulties during construction, especially when working with delicate, old, pleated, or otherwise demanding materials. These situations required practical problem-solving, design simplification, and continuous reflection on how to preserve both the concept and the sustainability value of the final piece.

Solutions and Approaches

A key strength of the Greek implementation was the selection of participants who had already completed the CBP and had voluntarily chosen to continue in the Entre-Fashion process. This contributed to a committed group of participants with an existing awareness of sustainability issues and a willingness to engage in a longer and more demanding development journey. To address differences in background and skill level, the process allowed room for flexibility and individual pathways. Participants were able to develop projects based on their own resources, experiences, and design language, while still working within the common Entre-Fashion framework. This made the process inclusive for participants with both formal and non-formal learning trajectories.

Mentoring and guidance also played an important role. Support from mentors and

program staff helped participants validate ideas, reflect on sustainability choices, and navigate technical or conceptual uncertainties. For some participants, online meetings and structured exchanges were especially useful in clarifying expectations and maintaining confidence during the development process.

A particularly effective approach in Greece was the strong use of existing materials as a starting point for design. Instead of depending on new sourcing, participants often worked with materials already available to them, such as family textiles, leftover fabrics, or components from previous unfinished garments. This reduced waste, made circularity tangible, and encouraged a hands-on understanding of reuse, redesign, and value recovery. In some cases, participants also integrated multifunctionality, emotional durability, and symbolic storytelling into the design, strengthening both the sustainability dimension and the uniqueness of the outcome.

Key Lessons Learned

The Greek experience showed that sustainable fashion development does not depend exclusively on formal education. Participants without formal studies in fashion were still able to engage meaningfully in the process when they had practical experience, strong motivation, and adequate guidance. This suggests that entrepreneurial and sustainable fashion learning can be successfully opened to broader target groups, provided that the framework is well structured.

Another important lesson was that sustainability can be expressed in multiple ways. In the Greek projects, sustainability was not limited to the use of certified materials. It was also reflected through upcycling, zero-waste thinking, reuse of existing resources, emotional connection to materials, durability, and multifunctional use. This broader understanding is especially valuable in contexts where access to certified or specialised sustainable materials is limited.

The examples also highlighted the importance of storytelling and emotional value in sustainable fashion. Transforming a family heirloom into a contemporary garment or reusing materials from previous projects gave participants an opportunity to create products with deeper meaning, identity, and continuity. This reinforces the idea that sustainability in fashion is not only technical, but also cultural and personal.

Finally, the process confirmed that constraints can be productive. Limited material availability, technical complexity, and the need to adapt ideas to real conditions did not necessarily weaken the outcomes. On the contrary, they often pushed participants to become more creative, resourceful, and conscious in their design decisions.

Recommendations

Based on the Greek implementation, several recommendations can be made for future editions of the Entre-Fashion process.

First, the requirement that participants complete the CBP before entering the product development phase should be maintained, as it creates a strong common foundation and improves preparedness. At the same time, future implementations should continue to remain open to participants with diverse educational and professional backgrounds, not only those currently enrolled in formal fashion education.

Second, additional support should be provided for the translation of sustainability concepts into concrete design and production decisions. Participants may benefit from more structured guidance on how to justify sustainability claims, assess material choices, and communicate circular strategies clearly and credibly.

Third, it would be useful to strengthen support around material sourcing in the Greek context. More information on local suppliers, deadstock options, certified materials, and alternative sourcing routes could help participants make better-informed decisions and reduce uncertainty during development.

Fourth, the process should continue to encourage the use of existing materials, upcycling strategies, and multifunctional design, as these proved highly relevant and accessible approaches in Greece. These methods not only reduce waste but also help participants connect sustainability with creativity and identity.

Finally, mentoring should remain a central component of the process, with regular checkpoints that support both technical development and reflective learning. This is especially important in mixed groups where participants may differ significantly in experience, confidence, and ability to structure their work independently.

6.4 Bulgaria



Context

The implementation of the Entre-Fashion process in Bulgaria involved a total of 22 VET learners, slightly below the initial target of 24 participants. Learners were recruited from secondary school and vocational classes providing training in the field of fashion, supported by in-person presentations, direct interaction with teachers, and dissemination through social media channels.

Participation was limited to students enrolled in education and training programmes related to fashion, as they were considered more likely to engage in a structured, long-term initiative requiring both creative and technical involvement. In addition, all participants were required to have completed the Green VETRINE Capacity Building Programme (CBP), ensuring a common baseline of knowledge. This requirement was successfully fulfilled by all participants.

All participants came from educational institutions, as structured learning environments play a key role in facilitating participation in initiatives of this nature. It was considered that individuals outside these contexts might face greater barriers to engagement and difficulties in project implementation.

The process was implemented in collaboration with industry partners acting as mentors, representing different segments of the textile and apparel value chain. This collaboration enabled learners to connect design development with real industry practices and constraints.

Key challenges

Recruitment of participants was not difficult. Many students joined with enthusiasm and strong interest. However, mobilising students to engage in extracurricular activities proved challenging due to their overall workload from other school commitments. Initially, progress was slower until ideas were clarified, and the actual production phase began.

Another important challenge was related to timing. The initial plan foresaw a continuous eight-month development process; however, the start of the initiative coincided with the end of the academic year, when students were focused on final assessments. During the summer period, participation dropped significantly, and engagement had to be reactivated in September through additional activities. As a result, the effective development phase took place between September and February, rather than following the originally planned timeline.

Maintaining learner engagement throughout the process also proved challenging. While some participants remained consistently active, others showed irregular participation, particularly in their interaction with mentors. Although the monitoring tool supported regular updates and feedback, it was not sufficient on its own to ensure continuous engagement.

From a technical perspective, learners faced difficulties related to sourcing sustainable materials, adapting initial concepts to available resources, and managing production constraints. These challenges often required significant modifications to the original design ideas.

Mentors also identified gaps in key transversal competences, particularly in time management, organisation, and proactive communication, which affected the pace and consistency of the process.

Solutions and approaches

To address these challenges, direct interaction and continuous discussion with mentors proved essential. Every change to the initial idea was discussed face-to-face with mentors, who actively provided guidance and direction for the correct implementation of product concepts.

After the summer period, additional meetings, discussions, and short sessions were organised to refresh knowledge and project tasks. Although progress resumed at a slower pace, this approach ensured continuity of the process.

The monitoring tool provided a structured framework for tracking progress and collecting information on learner activities, challenges, and reflections. Despite varying levels of engagement, it contributed to documenting the process and supporting coordination.

Learners adopted an iterative approach to product development, adapting their concepts based on material availability, technical feasibility, and mentor feedback. This flexibility proved essential in overcoming constraints.

Key lessons learned

The experience in Bulgaria showed that sustainable product development is inherently an iterative process. Learners discovered new opportunities to develop their talents and express themselves creatively. Sustainable materials offer unlimited possibilities when sufficient resources are available.

Initially, sourcing materials was challenging, which required learners to repeatedly adapt their ideas due to material limitations, technical difficulties, and feasibility constraints. This highlighted the importance of flexibility and problem-solving skills.

The sourcing of sustainable materials emerged as a key challenge, influencing both design decisions and final outcomes.

Another important lesson is the need to balance creativity with feasibility. While learners aimed to develop innovative solutions, they had to align these ambitions with production realities, available resources, and time constraints. The process also reinforced the understanding of sustainability as a systemic concept - extending beyond material selection to include production processes, durability, lifecycle thinking, and responsible practices across the value chain. Mentors highlighted the importance of aligning design ideas with market realities, including costs, scalability, and consumer expectations.

Recommendations

Based on the experience in Bulgaria, the following recommendations can be made:

- ❖ **Work schedules and planning should be aligned with the academic calendar, particularly considering the summer period, which is typically reserved for holidays.**
- ❖ **Stronger integration with educational programmes, including incorporation into formal teaching hours and active teacher involvement, can significantly improve participation.**
- ❖ **Recruitment efforts and engagement mechanisms should be supported by additional incentives to increase participant commitment.**
- ❖ **Mentoring processes should be further structured with clear guidelines.**

- ❖ **The understanding of sustainability as a systemic process should be strengthened.**
- ❖ **Practical and iterative learning approaches should remain a priority, as they effectively support the development of competences.**

7. Learner Experiences and Project Journey

7.1 Introduction

A central component of the **Entre-Fashion process was the opportunity for learners to translate sustainability principles into concrete product development experiences.** Throughout this journey, participants engaged in a structured process that guided them from initial concept development to more refined and viable product outcomes.

During this process, **learners explored different approaches to designing and developing apparel products while continuously reflecting on environmental responsibility, material choices, and the practical realities of fashion production.**

Rather than approaching sustainability as an abstract concept, learners were required to engage with it as part of an ongoing decision-making process. This included responding to constraints, adapting ideas, and balancing sustainability considerations with feasibility, creativity, and available resources.

Learners documented their experiences through short reflective texts and personal diaries, providing insights into their motivations, creative processes, and the challenges encountered throughout the development of their projects. These reflections constitute a key element of the methodology, supporting both individual learning and the evaluation of the overall process.

The analysis of these reflections provides valuable insights into how emerging fashion professionals engage with sustainability concepts in practice, and how structured educational initiatives such as VETRINE can support the development of more responsible and informed design practices.

Several common themes emerged across the learners' experiences, highlighting both the opportunities and the complexities associated with developing sustainable fashion products. These insights are particularly relevant for educators and stakeholders seeking to understand how sustainability learning can be effectively translated into practice and embedded within design processes.

Image 6: AEG student IDOIA RAZQUIN works with fabric scraps



A recurring theme in the learners' reflections was the challenge of balancing creative expression with sustainability objectives. While participants were strongly motivated to incorporate environmentally responsible practices into their projects, they frequently encountered **practical limitations related to material availability, production techniques, and overall design feasibility.**

In several cases, learners discovered that certain sustainable materials were difficult to source, limited in availability, or did not perform as expected during the construction process. These constraints required learners to reconsider and adapt their initial design concepts. Rather than following a linear development path, many participants engaged in iterative processes, adjusting their ideas in response to technical limitations, material behaviour, and feasibility considerations. This highlights a key aspect of sustainable design practice: **creativity is not developed in isolation, but in continuous interaction with constraints. Within the Entre-Fashion process, these constraints became an active driver of design decisions, encouraging learners to explore alternative solutions and refine their approaches.**

At the same time, **these challenges were frequently perceived as valuable learning opportunities.** Participants reported gaining a deeper understanding of the trade-offs involved in sustainable design, particularly in balancing environmental considerations with functionality, aesthetics, and feasibility.

Through this process, **learners developed greater awareness of how sustainability**

influences design decisions in practice. They also strengthened their ability to make informed choices, justify their approaches, and navigate the complexity inherent in developing responsible fashion products within real-world constraints.

8. Mentor and Industry Insights

8.1 The Importance of Industry Engagement

One of the key insights from the Entre-Fashion experience is that the transition from theoretical knowledge to practical application represents a critical stage in sustainability learning.

Learners demonstrated strong engagement with sustainability concepts, particularly during the initial training phase. However, applying these concepts in real design and development contexts proved to be one of the most significant challenges.

Throughout the process, sustainability was experienced as a dynamic and evolving concept rather than a fixed set of rules.

In particular, the experience showed that learners:

- ❖ **needed to adapt their initial ideas due to material availability and technical constraints;**
- ❖ **developed a stronger understanding of feasibility as a key component of design;**
- ❖ **improved their ability to make informed decisions based on real conditions;**
- ❖ **engaged in iterative processes, refining their concepts through testing and feedback;**
- ❖ **production constraints;**
- ❖ **durability and product lifecycle;**
- ❖ **usability and functionality;**
- ❖ **alignment with real-world conditions;**
- ❖ **rethink their concepts;**
- ❖ **prioritise certain sustainability aspects over others.**

This reinforces a central principle of the Entre-Fashion methodology:

sustainability learning is closely linked to decision-making under real-world constraints.

8.2 The Role of Mentors in the Entre-Fashion Process

Mentors play a central role in supporting learners throughout the Entre-Fashion journey, providing guidance that complements the theoretical knowledge acquired through the Capacity Building Programme.

During the development process, **mentors support learners in multiple ways, including providing feedback on design concepts and product ideas, advising on material selection and sustainability considerations, and discussing the feasibility of production processes.** This guidance helps learners refine their projects and prepare more robust and realistic final outcomes.

Mentoring interactions typically take place through structured meetings or checkpoints organised at different stages of the process. These moments allow learners to present their progress, discuss challenges, and receive targeted feedback that informs the next steps of their work. When integrated consistently, this structured approach supports continuous learning and strengthens decision-making throughout the product development process.

Beyond technical support, mentors also play a key role in connecting the learning experience to real industry practices.

Their involvement provides learners with:

- ❖ **technical guidance on design and production;**
- ❖ **feedback on feasibility and implementation;**
- ❖ **insights into industry expectations and standards;**
- ❖ **support in navigating decision-making processes;**
- ❖ **validating and refining concepts;**
- ❖ **identifying constraints early in the process;**
- ❖ **guiding learners towards more realistic and feasible solutions;**
- ❖ **encouraging critical thinking and reflection;**
- ❖ **time management;**
- ❖ **organisation;**
- ❖ **proactive communication;**

- ❖ **ability to plan and structure development processes;**
- ❖ **structured guidance significantly improves learning outcomes;**
- ❖ **industry involvement strengthens the relevance of the process;**
- ❖ **continuous interaction is essential for effective knowledge transfer.**

The collaboration between training institutions, project partners, and industry professionals therefore represents an important step towards building a stronger ecosystem for sustainable fashion education.

9. Conclusions and Future Perspectives

9.1 Key Outcomes of the VETRINE Learning Experience

The implementation of the **Green VETRINE Capacity Building Programme and the Entre-Fashion process** has demonstrated the strong potential of integrated learning approaches to support the development of sustainability competences in the textile and apparel sector.

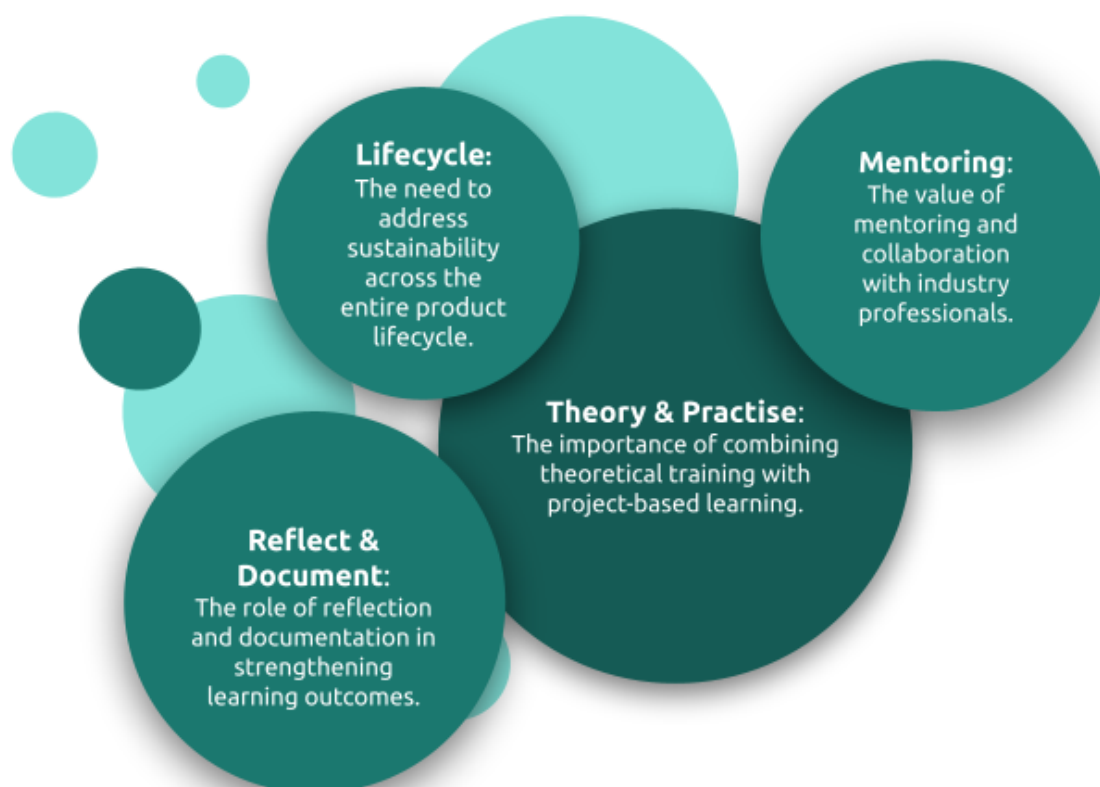
By combining theoretical knowledge, practical experimentation, mentoring, and collaboration with industry actors within a structured learning process, the VETRINE project created an environment in which learners could engage with sustainability in a holistic and applied way.

Throughout the project, participants explored sustainability not as an abstract concept, but as a set of practical considerations influencing material choices, product design, production feasibility, and market positioning. This approach enabled learners to develop a more realistic and operational understanding of sustainable fashion development.

The learning experiences documented in this manual demonstrate how structured and practice-based educational initiatives can support the preparation of future professionals capable of addressing the environmental, social, and economic challenges facing the textile and apparel sector.

9.2 Contributions to Sustainable Fashion Education

Image 8: Key educational principles



9.3 Future Perspectives and final reflection

Based on the experience through VETRINE project, **the following recommendations can support the effective implementation of sustainability-oriented learning initiatives:**

Mentoring

- ❖ define structured mentoring checkpoints throughout the process;
- ❖ match mentors with relevant expertise to learner projects;
- ❖ ensure regular and continuous interaction between mentors and learners;

Sustainability Integration

- ❖ require learners to justify sustainability-related decisions;

- ❖ promote lifecycle thinking and systemic approaches;
- ❖ encourage adaptation based on real constraints;
- ❖ support exploration of materials, reuse, and alternative solutions.

Learning Approach

- ❖ prioritise hands-on and experiential learning;
- ❖ encourage iterative development and redesign supporting reflection;
- ❖ integrate both technical and transversal skills development.

Monitoring and Coordination

- ❖ establish regular check-ins to support progress;
- ❖ document development processes and key decisions;
- ❖ use monitoring as a pedagogical tool, not only for reporting purposes.

10. Practical Guidance and Recommendations for Future Implementations

Institutional Preparation

Successful implementation of the Entre-Fashion methodology requires clear organisational planning and alignment between educational objectives, implementation timelines, and available support structures. Institutions are encouraged to define realistic schedules, allocate time for mentoring interactions, and establish connections with industry stakeholders before the start of the process.

Learner Preparation

Participants should receive an introduction to sustainability principles and the objectives of the methodology before beginning the development journey. Clearly communicating expectations regarding workload, timelines, and participation levels can help strengthen learner engagement throughout the process.

Supporting Experimentation and Reflection

The implementation experience demonstrated the importance of creating learning environments that encourage experimentation, critical thinking, and iterative development. **Learners benefit from having opportunities to test ideas, reflect on challenges, and adapt their concepts throughout the project lifecycle.**

Guidance for Mentors

Mentors play an essential role in supporting learner development throughout the process. Rather than imposing solutions, **mentors should encourage critical thinking, experimentation, and informed decision-making.** Constructive and continuous feedback can help learners better navigate the balance between creativity, sustainability, and technical feasibility.

Guidance for Educators and Trainers

Educators are encouraged to combine theoretical sustainability concepts with practical and project-based learning activities. The implementation experience highlighted the value of experiential learning approaches that allow learners to apply sustainability principles within real development scenarios.

Guidance for VET Providers and Institutions

Institutions implementing similar initiatives are encouraged to **establish strong collaboration with industry stakeholders** and create flexible implementation structures capable of adapting to local educational realities. **Long-term integration of sustainability-oriented methodologies** may contribute to strengthening future competences within the textile and apparel sector.

Replication Potential and Future Applications

The implementation of the Entre-Fashion methodology demonstrated strong adaptability across different educational and institutional environments. The methodology may therefore be replicated or adapted by VET providers, higher education institutions, sustainability-focused initiatives, fashion entrepreneurship programmes, and innovation hubs.

The experience also highlighted the potential for hybrid and multidisciplinary learning approaches combining sustainability education, mentoring, experimentation, and industry engagement.

The flexibility of the methodology allows future users to adapt the framework according to local contexts, learner profiles, and institutional capacities.

By combining sustainability-oriented learning with practical product development and reflective processes, the Entre-Fashion methodology contributes to preparing future professionals capable of responding to the evolving environmental, social, and economic challenges of the textile and apparel sector.