

STORYTELLING  
FOR  
SUSTAINABLE  
FUTURES  
**TOOLKIT**

**STORIES OF  
DAMAGE AND  
REPAIR**

Exam no. B215306





Clothes are more than just pieces of fabric. They are vessels of stories, memories, and experiences that shape our identities and our relationships with the world. However, the dominant narrative around clothing is often focused on consumerism, trend-chasing, and disposability, which erases the stories of the people who make, wear, and repair them. Here's a proposal of an event which aims to excavate alternative stories of clothing by exploring the themes of damage, repair and restores the emotional value of the clothing.

**TITLE:** Unthreading Narratives "Stories of damage and repair"

**OBJECTIVE:** The objective of this event is to create a safe and inclusive space for people to share their stories of damage and repair in clothing. By centring the experiences of people who have worn, repaired or repurposed their clothes, we hope to challenge the idea that clothes are disposable and highlight the resilience and creativity of people who refuse to participate in the fast fashion industry. The event will highlight the role of storytelling in creating awareness and inspiring action towards sustainable fashion practices.

**FORMAT:** The event can be conducted in a small group setting, with participants bringing in their old or damaged clothes. The event can be organised in any community space such as a park, community center, refugee camps, event halls, university etc. People from diverse communities and professional experts such as artists, designers and researchers are invited to participate in this event.

The first part of the even is focused on teaching the different mending techniques, such as darning, patching, and sewing. Participants can then apply these techniques to their own clothes, with the help of the instructor.

The second part of the event is focused on storytelling. Participants are encouraged to excavate the alternate narratives by sharing the stories behind their clothes, such as where they got them, when they wore them, what memories are associated with them and how mending these clothes impacted those memories. In the end we will have 5-10 minute storytelling session, the stories can be told in any format - spoken word, poetry, song, dance, puppetry, performance or any other creative form.



## MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Prompt Cards
- Mending tools: Thread, needles, scissors, fabric, patches, and embellishments.

\*\* All the above materials will be provided by the organizers.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- Each participant will bring a item of clothing (old/new/damaged/thrifted/found) for repair.
- In the mending/repair workshop participants will have the opportunity to repair or repurpose their own clothes. The workshop will be led by skilled repairers who will demonstrate techniques such as darning, patching, and embroidery. Participants will also have access to tools, materials, and resources to experiment with their own repair methods. The workshop will be designed to foster a sense of community and collaboration, with participants sharing their skills and knowledge with each other.
- Post the workshop gather everyone in a circle for storytelling session. Till the time people might have became more comfortable with each other, here they are welcomed to discuss about their mending experience and show their garment.
- Explain that the purpose of the storytelling session is to share the stories behind the garments that were repaired during the workshop, and to connect those stories to larger themes of sustainability.
- To brainstorm on the ideas for storytelling they are provided with a questionnaire and Prompt cards.
- Each card has a small exercise to do which will help them to build their narrative/story.
- Write down your new narrative on a piece of paper, including key plot points, characters.
- Share your new narrative with the group in your desired form.
- Discuss how it challenges the dominant narrative and promotes sustainability.





**QUESTIONNAIRE:** Building a sustainable alternate story requires careful planning, collaboration, and creativity. The questionnaire can help you brainstorm key elements of your new narrative or story and identify potential challenges and opportunities.

Here's a questionnaire you can use to brainstorm on building a alternate story:

- Why did you bring this particular item for repair? What is the story behind it?
- How do you feel when you wear a piece of clothing that you have repaired?
- How has your relationship with your clothes changed after repairing it? What do you value most about your clothes?
- Do you believe that repairing clothes is an important part of sustainability? Why or why not?
- Can you think of a time when you threw away a piece of clothing that could have been repaired? What could you have done differently?
- Have you ever bought second-hand clothing? What was your experience like?
- Can you share a story about a piece of clothing that you inherited from someone else? How has it influenced your relationship with that person?
- How do you think the fashion industry can become more sustainable? What changes would you like to see?
- Can you share a story about a piece of clothing that you love but can no longer wear? How do you keep it in your life?
- Can you think of a way to give new life to old clothes that might otherwise be thrown away? How could you use storytelling to inspire others to do the same?

These questions are meant to encourage reflection and introspection about the stories and emotions related to clothes, damage, repair, and sustainability. They can be used as a starting point for storytelling exercises or as a guide for personal reflection.



Prompt card 1:  
**BUILD CHARACTER**

Age:

Place of origin:

Material:

Adjectives:

Ex. Funky, ripped, old, colourful





It was a very cold night.....

## Prompt card 2: **Role play**

Imagine that you are that you are the clothing item. Go on a coffee date with another clothing item, tell each other about your journey. Gossip about your owner.





Prompt card 3:  
**Time travel**

Travel back to the past and relive those happy/sad/adventurous memories. Talk about how you came to life, your favourite memory, favourite person who have worn you.





Prompt card 4:  
**The Future**

Imagine the future, what if you don't have a home anymore, you are damaged and there's no one to help you. Or, you are in safe hands and someone is taking care of you.





## VARIATIONS:

- Collaborative storytelling: Pair with another participant/ participants and build a narrative together.
- Role-playing: Tell the story as you are the character, act out using gestures and movement.
- Visual storytelling: Use your clothes as props to tell your story

## CONCLUSION:

Unthreading Narratives: An Exploration of Damage and Repair in Clothing aims to amplify alternative stories of clothing by creating a space for people to share their personal experiences and skills. By highlighting the emotional, cultural, and ecological significance of repairing clothes, we hope to challenge the dominant narrative around fashion and inspire people to see their clothes as meaningful and valuable objects.

Use storytelling to build empathy: Stories have the power to create empathy and connection. People can use storytelling to help others understand the impact of climate change and the importance of sustainability. People can share stories of how climate change is affecting communities around the world, and how sustainable practices can help mitigate these effects.

