

# Current Issues



Read each section, then think about the questions that follow.

## GOLD

Gold is rare and hard to find. More than half of the 161,000 tons of ever mined has been extracted in the last 50 years. Much of it is stored as currency. But still, the global demand for gold continues to rise. But people still want more.

### Questions to think about:

- Where does gold come from today?
- Who gains and who loses in the gold industry?



## MINING

Gold, silver, and copper are used in many everyday things like phones and laptops. But getting these minerals out of the ground can cause a lot of harm. Mining often leads to pollution, human rights issues, and forces communities off their land.

### Question:

- Could the things we use be connected to this harm, even if we don't realise it?

## RESOURCE EXPLOITATION

In Colombia, a lot of forest is being destroyed to make quick money. These forests are home to animals and plants, and they're sacred to Indigenous groups like the Emberá. But illegal and predatory mining is pushing these people off their land and damaging their way of life.

### Question:

- How could our lifestyles affect nature and people around the world?



## THE HUMAN COST

In Chocó, Colombia, the Atrato River is very important to local communities. But illegal gold mining has poisoned the river, ruined the land, and made people sick. Armed groups are often in control, making the area dangerous.

In 2016, a court made a big decision: it gave the river legal rights, just like a person. This means the government must protect it and help the people who live along the river. A group called the River Guardians was created to stand up for the river but they are volunteers - they didn't get any money to help do this job. Still, they keep fighting to protect their land and lives.

### Questions:

- How can we stand up for people who are suffering?
- How can we put our faith into action?



## CONSUMERISM

In rich countries, we buy too much clothes, food, tech, and more. We're told this makes us happy, but it often hurts the planet and other people. Pope Francis called this the "throwaway culture." He said we should remember every product has a story: where the materials came from, who made it, the pollution it caused, and where it ends up as waste.

Right now, we're using up resources like we have 1.75 Earths—but we only have one.

### Question:

How can we live in a way that protects the planet and respects others?





## GOLD PRICES – 25 YEAR TIMELINE

2000 – 2011 **RISE** Gold prices rise driven by the 2008 financial crisis

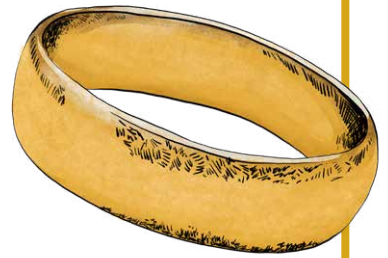
2013 **CRASH** Sharp -25% drop due to reduced demand

2020 **HIGH** All-time high price driven by uncertainty of the pandemic

2023 **RISE** Gold prices outperform analyst predictions by +23%

2025 **FORECAST TO RISE** due to geopolitical tensions and monetary policies

Source: Gold Bullion price, [www.bullionvault.com](http://www.bullionvault.com)



## MINING

Smartphones contain over 30 different precious and semi-precious elements, including Gold, Silver, Copper, Palladium.

Central banks worldwide hold approximately 37,755 metric tons of gold, nearly 20% of all gold ever mined.

Source: World Gold Council

Human rights violations often occur in mining, including the use of child labour, exploitation of indigenous communities, water pollution, and violence.

Source: Human Rights Watch



## CONSUMERISM

On average each person wastes 120 kilograms of food per year.

Source: UN SDGs

Clothes discarded in one year in the UK would fill Wembley Stadium.

Source: Fashion Revolution

The world generates 50 million tonnes of electronic waste annually, but only 20% is formally recycled. The rest often ends up in informal dumpsites in poorer countries, exposing workers to hazardous materials.

Source: United Nations



### Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

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