



Loop project - National research
INTERVIEWS: Entry # 47



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THE ONE

who reuses the materials used



Braided rug with old clothes (cc),
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Making_A_Braided_Rug.jpg

Reuse is

the reuse of a product before it becomes waste. It takes place when, after an initial phase of consumption, an object continues to be used while maintaining its original use function.

Otherwise, recycling requires the destruction of waste to create secondary raw materials with which new industrial products are made.

It should be understood as an alternative to the disposable concept. The raw materials most used by the sector are polyester and cotton, and we are talking about about 3.2 million tons of raw materials used every year. The purpose of this article is to evaluate the environmental impact of a cotton t-shirt, evaluating the socio-economic, environmental and human health effects, all through a more competent analytical framework: the analysis of the life cycle, Life Cycle Assessment (LCA).

We all have closets full of stuff we can't do without. Open the drawer and find yourself struggling with some old T-shirts that no longer fit because they are too tight, the colors have gone out of fashion, or probably because we have an emotional connection with that particular dress or simply because we like it too much, but above all, there are obvious holes that make it only a gruyere suitable to end up in the garbage.

And since we will not even be able to give them to a friend or give them to charity, since we would only make a bad impression, here is that moving to creative recycling becomes the best way to implement. Old T-shirts, now baggy pants, ruined shirts, each garment can be reused with the right pinch of imagination. For creative recycling a little more challenging, you can think of transforming an old sweater into the outer lining of a bag.

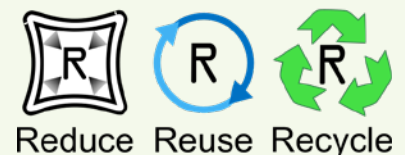


From the t-shirts you can also easily obtain elastic bags with large meshes, washable and usable for example for shopping without having to resort to plastic bags. Not only will you not have uselessly thrown away a shirt, but you will have created your very personal winter bag.

Creating a shopper is actually quite simple: just cut out the desired shape in the fabric of the shirt and fix the edges with a seam (preferably enveloping, to give greater resistance to the bag), and then proceed to shred the entire surface according to a regular pattern, on both sides. It is necessary to preserve the upper part of the bag, also providing a wider slot for the handles and taking care not to damage the side seams! With a few moves you can create shopping bags of various sizes and colors, excellent to keep in your bag and to be extracted if necessary.

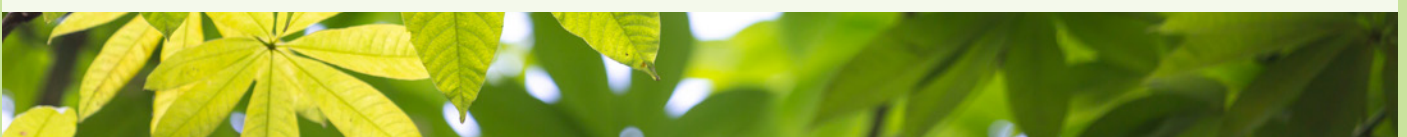
HOW did you discover the opportunities related to reuse?

Through some research we have discovered many things. Investments of 280 million euros per year in the circular economy, with a level of separate waste collection that stands at 69% and a landfill rate that is decidedly lower than the national average. This is the balance sheet of Italian public service companies as described in the position paper “Utilities as protagonists of the ecological transition: the challenges of the circular economy”, developed by Utilitalia, the Federation of water, environmental and energy companies.



“R” CIRCULAR ECONOMY (c),
https://freesvg.org/img/3_Rs_Arvin61r58.png

The work focuses on a representative sample of 84% of total revenues and 77% of workers in the sector, which affects approximately 21 million citizens.



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The benefits of a “circular” approach - it is explained - go beyond the collection and management of waste: in water there are opportunities linked to the reuse of purified wastewater, the recovery and reuse of sewage sludge and revamping of the plants to improve their efficiency.

For the environment, it is possible to develop reuse models, enhance quality separate collection, implement new collection flows, reduce waste production and apply innovative technologies.

As regards energy, we can focus on revamping and repowering of generation plants, recovery of accumulators, development of sharing models and management of the end of life of energy plants. In the European economy, the environmental benefits - in a logic linked to the reduction of CO₂ emissions - could be between 80 and 150 million tons by 2030, and between 300 and 550 million tons by 2050.



Organic Shopper Bag, photo by Towfiq barbhuiya on Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/xwGtoAY9ZYs>

To these are added the economic benefits: investments in the circular economy can unlock up to 356 billion euros by 2025 in Europe, with effects also on the 10% reduction in raw material costs (up to 12% less by 2050). The overall potential could be a 7% increase in GDP by 2030. To make the most of these potentials, joint actions involving utilities and policy makers are required.



Recycle bins, photo by Sigmund on Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/a14RJ-Mw4I>

On the one hand, utilities must adopt programs that make their business more circular, equip themselves with precise measurement tools, improve recycling performance and participate in collaboration platforms for the development of shared projects.

On the other hand, policy makers must prepare a national strategy for the circular economy and a roadmap for the development of waste treatment plants; we also need a revision of the End of Waste regulations, the extension of the scope of the extended producer responsibility to new waste supply chains and finally the incentive for the development of biomethane.



WHAT DO YOU REUSE AND HOW:

can you give us some examples of reuse in your economic activity?

Stuff the sleeves of the sweater and its central part with unused fabric or other old clothing, inside which you can possibly insert an old pillow. In this way you can create a new kennel for a cat at virtually no cost and the little four-legged friend will certainly appreciate it.

Starting from one or more old sweaters - think for example of those that children can no longer wear, when they grow up - it is possible to make warm hats for the winter. It involves cutting out the necessary fabric to model a new hat from the sweater you intend to use and taking advantage of your cutting and sewing skills, perhaps with the help of expert hands, if necessary. Each hat will be unique and customizable, for example by using ribbons, buttons or pom poms.



Clothes painting ideas (cc),
<https://www.pxfuel.com/en/free-photo-qknbw>



Bracelets in recycled fabric, photo by Leon Wu on Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/ctcnollK4sw>

The bracelets can be obtained from the creative recycling of an old sweater. For the creation of the bracelets it is very convenient to use the cuffs and sleeves of the sweaters, as they already have the right shape and size. Roll parts of sleeves or cuffs on themselves and fix them with a thread, to form a bracelet, or use the parts of the links to cover existing bracelets that you want to change their appearance.

If you have an unused sweater available, you don't necessarily have to buy a new pair of gloves when needed, as starting with the sweater you can cut out the parts needed to create new tailored gloves, taking into account the size of your hands. Just join the two cut out parts to form one of the two gloves, before proceeding with the second.

The cup covers are a decorative and at the same time useful element, as they avoid burning your fingers when you touch a hot cup of tea and at the same time allow you to grip the hot cup without problems.



They are very simple to obtain by directly cutting the necessary parts from the sleeves of an old sweater. They can be finished and decorated as desired. If there are a lot of unused sweaters in the closets, you can think about putting them together so that you get a blanket.



Hand painted shirt idea, pixabay license, <https://pixabay.com/it/photos/diseño-projam2016-maglietta-logo-1704517/>

It will be a question of cutting out every recoverable part from each sweater to create a variegated blanket, in a “patchwork” style. It will be very useful to keep handy on the sofa on the coldest evenings of the winter months.

One of the old sweaters may be the perfect size to make a new decorative pillowcase for your sofa cushions. It will take a minimum of cutting and sewing work in order to create pillow covers that are pleasing to the eye and perfectly suited to the cushions at your disposal. They can be decorated as desired with buttons or with knitted or crocheted flowers.

LET’S TALK about the real impact of reuse on your turnover: economically speaking, what are these figures?

Through some research we have discovered that starting to apply the circular economy in the recycling of fabrics would significantly reduce the amount of waste to be disposed of and would create significant economic opportunities. Italy is a country that is still very attached to a culture in which preserving is overshadowed by throwing away. Most of the items we have in the house will eventually end up in the trash.



Creative t-shirt reuse (cc), <https://www.maxipixel.net/Garbage-Upgrade-Foej-Upcycling-Tinker-4838037>

This happens because in most cases repairing that object requires an economic effort and more time than buying a new one. However, something is changing: second hand buying and selling, creative recycling and all the other practices involving the reuse spinnery are converging towards the only ideal, which is that for which the Second Hand Economy will be the salvation of this planet (and of the wallet).

This happens for the most different reasons: 40% of people consider it a practical way to get rid of what is no longer needed; 18% do it to protect the environment; about 33% of people believe that buying new things is a waste of resources.

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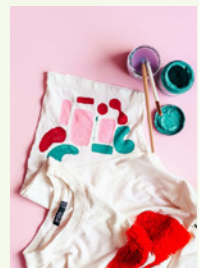
The economy of reuse is based on the idea that everything must have a purpose for the entire duration of its existence. The goal is to get to the production of things that are never thrown into landfills, but simply reused for something else.



Sustainable fashion (cc), <https://thenounproject.com/term/sustainable-fashion/4068309/>

This is not just a goal that is good for the planet as it preserves raw materials. Producing using materials and components from the reuse, recycling and recovery cycle reduces production costs.

Today 87% is sent to landfill or incinerated, with a volume comparable to a garbage truck full of textile waste every second. This is demonstrated by a study by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which reports that 13% of textile products are somehow recycled after the use of clothing, while another 12% is used in less valuable uses, but often extremely difficult to recycle. Only 1% is recycled into new clothing. If textiles were put back into circulation instead of being considered waste to be incinerated, the total value of textile waste, which amounts to more than \$ 100 billion a year, could be preserved, while new jobs would be created in collection facilities. , sorting and recycling.



Creative tshirt reuse, photo by okeykat on Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/rw81Rz5GrPo>

The virtuous practice of reusing fabrics could help reduce the costs of materials used in the fashion and clothing sector, avoiding those related to waste treatment, while the circular economy linked to the recycling of fabrics could be a driving force for occupation.

Do you think that in the city of New York alone - according to the same foundation - more than 20 million dollars a year are spent on the disposal in landfills and incineration of fabrics - most of which are dressed - and in the United Kingdom the Estimated cost for landfill disposal of clothing and home textiles each year is about 82 million pounds, it is clear the value of giving new life to used fabrics. All these economic and environmental benefits “could help create a more resilient fashion industry in the future”. In Italy, however, the cost of fabrics starts from 8 to 15 euros.

REUSE

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is the so-called “circular economy”?

A	B	C
80%	10%	10%

2. Do you believe that a more sustainable economic system can be equally productive than the current one?

A	B	C
20%	10%	70%

3. Which of these consumer choices have you decided to implement in the last 10 years to protect the environment?

A	B	C
10%	10%	80%

4. How will the so-called “circular economy” affect the job market?

A	B	C
0%	100%	0%

5. In your work, how many strategic choices related to sustainability have been made in the last 10 years?

A	B	C
62%	30%	8%

6. Which of these 4 “Rs” is more important to ensure a better future for humanity?

A	B	C	D
Reuse 10%	reduce 20%	recycle 10%	redesign 60%

7. Which of these 4 “Rs” is most present in your family’s daily life?

A	B	C	D
Reuse 70%	recycle 10%	redesign 0%	reduce 20%

8. In your opinion, what link is there between technology and the “circular economy”?

A	B	C
90%	0%	10%

9. Do you think we will be able to change the way we consume so as not to affect the environment and its limited resources?

A	B	C
0%	70%	30%

10. Are you familiar with the UN 2030 Agenda or have you ever heard of SDGs?

A	B	C
20%	60%	20%

QUESTIONNAIRE

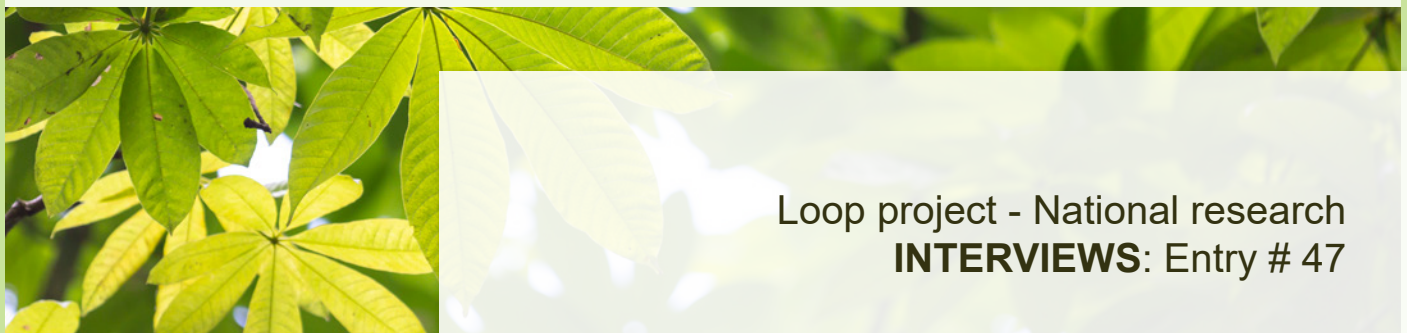
QUESTIONNAIRE

11. Do you think that the economy in the past was more sustainable than it is today?

A	B	C
70%	10%	20%

12. Which of these 3 statements do you consider the most true and important?

A	B	C
10%	20%	70%



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