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SCALE UP CYCLING

UNDERSTANDING THE ECOSYSTEM OF REUSE AND UPCYCLING

PR3: Community building through upcycling training modules

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CTRIA

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ANEL Nicosia Development Agency · AiA MCA · Defoin · ЯРА · CTRIA · НГПИ Тревненска школа

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

7R Model	the model opts for a circular economy rather than a linear one. 7R means: Rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle, repair, rot.
Capacity Building	Capacity-building is defined as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world
Community Engagement	Community engagement is getting involved and participating in an organised way for the benefit of the community
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	Corporate Social Responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders
Earth Overshoot Day	Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year.
Ecological Footprint	the impact of a person or community on the environment, expressed as the amount of land required to sustain their use of natural resources.
Fast fashion	is the business model of replicating recent catwalk trends and high-fashion designs, mass-producing them at a low cost, and bringing them to retail stores quickly while demand is at its highest. The term fast fashion is also used generally to describe the products of the fast fashion business model.
Government	A government is the system or group of people governing an organized community, usually a country.
NGO	An NGO is an organisation established independently of a government. They are typically nonprofit entities, and many of them are active in humanitarianism or social issues.
Reuse	Reuse refers to the practice of using an item or product multiple times for the same purpose or for a different purpose than its original intended use

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third module of the European project "ScaleUpcycling".



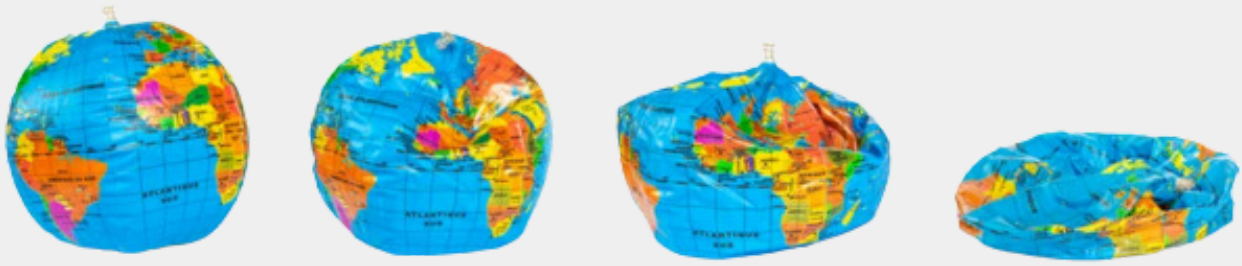
This training document focuses on various aspects of sustainable consumption, waste management, reuse, and upcycling. It introduces the 7R model, explores the concept of ecological footprint, and highlights the roles of upcycling actors in creating a more sustainable future. The document aims to raise awareness, provide practical insights, and encourage young people to engage in sustainable practices in their daily lives and projects.

The module covers both theoretical and practical knowledge. The methodology focuses on content that can be reviewed at home and on tasks that can be completed independently. Links have been embedded in the description and a quiz at the end of the module will help to check the knowledge acquired.

1. SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Waste Reduction – 7R Model

Overuse of non-renewable resources is causing global climate change and significantly reducing the amount of resources available for future generations. Permanent growth is not sustainable in the long term. It is causing an ecological crisis and ecosystem collapse, so a fundamental change of approach is needed. We need to reduce consumption, and emissions and shift to sustainable habits.



This is very much needed, as we are reaching the day of overshoot earlier every year. Have you heard about it?

Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year. In 2023m it falls on 2 August. This means that by the end of the year we will be in debt to the planet, using up our children's resources.

To find out when Overshoot day is in your country, click in the following picture:



To avoid overconsumption, we need to live more consciously and strive for sustainable consumption. Sustainable consumption refers to the responsible use of resources to meet current needs while ensuring that future generations can also fulfill their needs. It involves conscious choices in purchasing, reducing waste, and considering the social and environmental impacts of our consumption patterns.

How can we measure whether our consumption is sustainable? There is a metric called the carbon footprint.

It is a measure of how much resource - land, water, air - it takes to produce a product or to live a certain way of life. It is a measure of the extent to which we use the renewable assets and reserves of our natural environment.





Everyone has a carbon footprint, you can calculate yours and your family's by clicking on the link

We don't have to give up our habits and comforts to live more responsibly. Here are some examples to help you make our everyday consumption more sustainable*:

Transport: reduce the number of flights and car journeys! Use public transport, trains, cycle, and walk more! Not only will we reduce air pollution and emissions, we can also improve our health.
Heating: It's worth turning down the heating. By reducing the temperature by just 1 degree, you can cut your heating bill by up to a tenth and save your household up to 300 kg of CO2 a year.
Electricity use: Use energy-saving light bulbs. Unplug appliances that are not in use. Leave phones on the charger until they are fully charged, then unplug them and unplug the charger.
Waste:

- Generate less waste and collect it separately. Try to reduce the amount of things you buy and use. Buy only what you need and as much of everything as you need, not more.
- Switch to reusable products! Make a list of things you will soon need to buy and then try to figure out how to make your purchases more ethical.
- Replace single-use wipes and tissues with textiles, and liquid soap and shampoo with solids to reduce waste.
- Use as little plastic as possible! Reuse what you can! What you cannot use, should be collected separately.

Fast Fashion: prioritise quality over quantity! Don't buy more than you need, take into account the huge water and energy consumption of the garment industry, the use of polluting chemicals, and the fact that nearly 40% of the clothes we buy are thrown away within a year. The fashion industry is responsible for 10% of all carbon dioxide emissions.
Repair: take care of your things, and repair them if necessary. For consumer durables, we should also strive to extend the life of our items, call a repairer, and try to get our machines repaired.
Stop replacing your mobile phone according to the new trend! Think about the huge ecological footprint of making phones, and mining the metals needed to make them.



Can you think of any other ideas to make your consumption more sustainable? The videos below will help you:





In the examples above, we have seen the following expressions: reduce, repair, reuse... etc. If we organise these expressions properly, we arrive at the 7R model. But what is it? The 7Rs are 7 ways to reduce waste starting with the letter R. They are Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle, and Rot.



Rethink: This involves critically examining our consumption patterns and habits. It encourages us to question whether we truly need a particular product, service, or resource, and to consider more sustainable alternatives.

Refuse: The "Refuse" principle suggests that we should refuse or say no to things that are unnecessary, harmful to the environment, or not in line with our sustainable values. It can be applied to single-use items, excessive packaging, or products that contribute significantly to waste.

Reduce: This principle focuses on reducing the amount of waste generated by using fewer resources and consuming less overall. By being mindful of our consumption and making conscious choices, we can minimize our environmental impact.

Reuse: Reusing means finding ways to use items again instead of discarding them after a single use. This can involve repairing items, passing them on to others, or repurposing them for different functions.

Recycle: Recycling is the process of converting waste materials into new products or materials to prevent them from ending up in landfills or becoming litter. It helps conserve resources and reduce the environmental impact of waste.

Repair: Repairing items instead of discarding them can extend their lifespan and reduce the demand for new products, thus saving resources and reducing waste.

Rot: In the context of sustainability, "Rot" refers to composting organic waste, such as food scraps and yard trimmings. Composting allows organic matter to decompose naturally and be recycled into nutrient-rich soil for gardening and agriculture**.

**Source: https://www.thisgreenlifestyle.com/all-articles/the-7-rs-and-the-hierarchy-of-waste

2. REUSE AND UPCYCLING AS A POSSIBLE PATH TO REACH SUSTAINABILITY

Promoting sustainable or responsible consumption and planning waste management for a larger community, such as a municipality, is based on short- and long-term waste management plans and strategies.

Have you ever seen a waste management plan? Aarhus in Denmark has plans for all types of waste, and you can check out the city's plastics strategy for the coming years by clicking on the picture below:



New waste management plans are shifting the emphasis from waste treatment and recovery to prevention. One way to prevent waste is to reuse it.

Reuse refers to the practice of using an item or product multiple times for the same purpose or a different purpose than its original intended use. Instead of discarding items after a single use, reusing encourages extending the lifespan of products and reducing waste. This sustainable approach helps conserve resources, minimize environmental impact, and promote a more circular economy.

You may not have realised it, but you've probably used the reuse method many times before. Have you used any of the following?

- Refilling a plastic bottle
- Reusing of gift-wrapping paper
- Reusing shopping bags
- Putting jam or preserves in old jars
- Storing cake or other items in an ice-cream box
- Using second-hand clothes

It can be seen that in these cases we are reusing an object in its original function. If you are a bit creative, you can change the original purpose of objects, for example by planting flowers in a tire or a shoe.



This creative reuse is called upcycling

Upcycling is a creative and innovative way of transforming old, discarded, or unused materials into new products or objects of higher value or quality. Unlike recycling, which breaks down materials into raw form, upcycling takes existing items and gives them a new life by repurposing them in a way that adds value or improves their functionality.

To give you a bit of practice and encourage you to upcycle, take a look at the decoration of the room below. Which of these objects were made using the upcycling method?



To give you a bit of practice and encourage you to upcycle, take a look at the decoration of the room below. Which of these objects were made using the upcycling method?

Practical Exercise: Wardrobe Sorting

To practise and deepen your knowledge of reusing and upcycling a little further, let's tidy up your wardrobe.

Unpack everything in one pile!

If you need to, get some storage: hangers, and drawer organizers, but you can also use a shoebox.

Group your unpacked items according to the following criteria:



I love it very much, it's good for me. Good condition, I use it often.	Back in the cupboard after sorting.
I love it very much, it's good for me, but I'm not using it right now.	Clean, tidy and put away.
Good condition, but I use it very rarely or not at all.	I pass it on, I sell it.
Minor flaws can be repaired.	I will have it repaired and then decide its fate (keep it, pass it on).
Damage or defects that mean it can no longer be used.	I upcycle or dispose of it in the best possible way.

Where should I take what I no longer need?

There are a number of options to choose from if you want to keep your items and clothes in good condition and still usable. You can sell, swap or donate. There are many online options for this, but in-person swaps work well too.



Don’t hesitate to attend SWAP Parties!

3. ACTORS IN THE ECOSYSTEM, THEIR ROLES AND NETWORKS



In the table below, we have collected the main actors involved in the process and promotion of reuse and have listed a link between each of them that you may have heard of. Can you identify any others?

	Government	Businesses	NGOs, Schools	Individuals
Government		Innovation and Investment: Governments can provide incentives and funding opportunities for businesses that invest in sustainable technologies and initiatives.	Capacity Building: NGOs can provide training and capacity-building programs to government agencies, enhancing their knowledge and skills in sustainable development.	**Community Engagement:** Governments can collaborate with local communities and individuals to implement sustainable development projects that address community-specific needs and priorities.

	Government	Businesses	NGOs, Schools	Individuals
Businesses	Regulatory Frameworks: Governments play a critical role in establishing environmental regulations and policies that encourage businesses to adopt sustainable practices. These regulations can include emissions standards, waste management requirements, and energy efficiency targets.		Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Businesses can collaborate with NGOs to design and implement CSR initiatives focused on sustainability. These partnerships allow businesses to contribute to social and environmental causes and demonstrate their commitment to responsible practices.	**Education and Awareness:** Businesses can play a significant role in educating individuals about sustainability issues and promoting eco-conscious behaviours through marketing and public campaigns.
NGOs, Schools	On-the-Ground Implementation: NGOs possess valuable expertise in implementing sustainability projects. Governments can collaborate with NGOs to execute projects and ensure effective on-the-ground implementation.	Stakeholder Engagement: NGOs facilitate dialogue between businesses and stakeholders, including local communities and environmental activists. Engaging stakeholders helps businesses understand community needs and concerns, leading to more inclusive and sustainable business practices.		**Education and Awareness:** NGOs can play a significant role in educating individuals about sustainability issues and promoting eco-conscious behaviours.

	Government	Businesses	NGOs, Schools	Individuals
Individuals	Behavioural Change Programs: Governments can implement behavioural change programs to encourage individuals to adopt sustainable practices, such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and responsible consumption.	**Consumer Influence:** Individual consumers have the power to drive demand for sustainable products and services. Businesses respond by adopting eco-friendly practices to meet consumer preferences.	Community Engagement: NGOs can collaborate with local communities and individuals to implement sustainable development.	

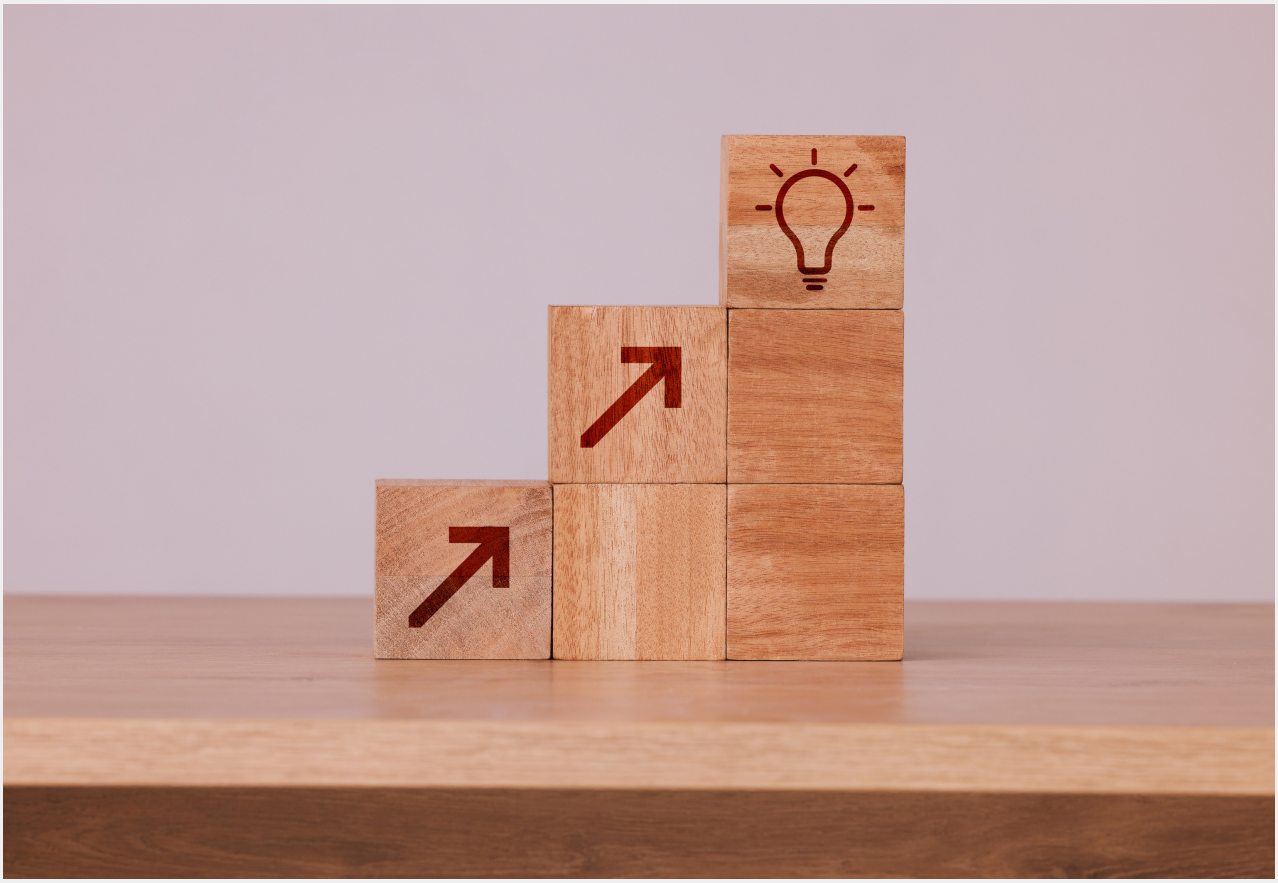
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Practical Exercise: Step by Step Guide on Upcycle Networking

1. Identify Participants: Gather a diverse group of individuals or organizations interested in upcycling. This could include students, artists, craftsmen, local businesses, or environmental groups.
2. Set Goals: Define the objectives of the exercise. It could be promoting sustainable practices, fostering creativity, building community relationships, or generating awareness about upcycling's benefits.
3. Select Materials: Collect a variety of materials that can be upcycled. This might include discarded items like glass bottles, cardboard, textiles, plastic containers, or anything that would otherwise end up in the landfill.
4. Provide Tools and Resources: Ensure that all necessary tools and resources are available for the participants, such as scissors, glue, paints, brushes, sewing machines, etc.
5. Facilitate Brainstorming Sessions: Encourage participants to come up with ideas for upcycling projects.
6. Plan and Create: Give the participants a designated timeframe to work on their projects. Allow them to explore and experiment with the materials and techniques.
7. Share Progress: Organize check-in points during the exercise to allow participants to share their progress with others. This can foster collaboration and inspire new ideas.
8. Feedback and Reflection: Encourage participants to provide feedback on the exercise and share their experiences. Reflect on what worked well and what could be improved for future collaborations.
9. Upload the projects to the Scaleupcycling Platform! (https://scaleupcycling.eu/)

CONCLUSION

We have come to the end of the third module. We reviewed some concepts related to responsible consumption and looked at what we can do to achieve this in our own environment. We looked for examples of how to keep a consumer item in circulation for longer and who to turn to if you want to live more environmentally conscious lives. At the end of the module, we also gave tips on how to create your own upcycling community.



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THE FUTURE IS NOT INHERITED, IT IS BUILT. LET'S MAKE A SUSTAINABLE WORLD FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



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https://www.scaleupcycling.eu/

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