

RE-USE/REPAIR: EXPAND THE SHELF-LIVES OF PRODUCTS

By reusing what you already have or by reinventing new uses for the item, you can extend the item's product life. Before rushing out to the store to buy an item make the decision to buy as a last recourse. For example, we can use pickle jars for storage rather than buying a brand new container. It's the idea of being creative with the things you have, to extend the life of a product.

If I no longer have a use for the item I can give away the item instead of throwing it away. I can donate unwanted equipment, furniture, supplies, clothes to a nonprofit organization, schools, a shelter or charity. Also, I may be able to reclaim some of the value of my items through consignment stores or pawn shops. If there is no other use for the product, then recycle.

Reuse means recovering and reusing products or their components. It includes both preparing for reuse and reuse.

Preparing for reuse refers to checking, cleaning or repairing recovery operations, by which products or their components that would have become waste are prepared in a way so that they will be reused without any other pre-processing.

Reuse means any operation by which products or components that are not waste are used again for the same purpose for which they were conceived.

Reusing items decreases the use of material and energy resources and reduces pollution and natural capital degradation. Recycling does so too, but to a lesser degree.

Reusing products is thus the second best option in waste management, after reducing!

WHY IS REUSE IMPORTANT?

Reuse confronts the same problems than reduce: There is too much waste being produced in the European Union! By extending the lifespan of products, preparing for reuse and reuse are influential measures to reduce the amount of waste produced. Reuse has a strong value for sustainable development because it not only promotes environmental protection through waste prevention but also contributes to social aims and has economic benefits.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF REUSE:

- Reduction of the amount of waste, including hazardous waste
- Pollution prevention
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global climate change
- Decreased strain on natural resources (raw materials, fuel, forests, water)
- Preservation of the "embodied energy" that was originally used to manufacture an item
- Social benefits of reuse:
 - Fight against poverty by providing affordable products to low income households
 - Social inclusion by bringing disadvantaged people back in the labour market and society
 - Job creation in collection, sorting, testing, refurbishment and reselling of items reused
 - Training opportunities in fields such as driving commercial vehicles, carpentry, electrical engineering, marketing, or even handicraft and art.