

Guidelines for the upcycling of any materials

WP2

UPNOWASTE

UPcycling: New life for Old
items to reduce WASTE

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Introduction

This document presents the Guidelines for the upcycling of any material, which have been developed by UPNOWASTE partners starting from the common Methodology for the reuse/recycling of materials. Thanks to this report, partners compared findings and identified a common methodology to conduct recycling and upcycling cafés, including examples of good practices for reuse/recycle of different materials and all the stages to follow in the reuse/recycling of any material.

The Guidelines build on the results highlighted in the UPNOWASTE Methodology and on the identified stages to outline instructions and recommendations on how to implement recycling/upcycling workshops using the materials considered.

Purpose and structure of the Guidelines

These Guidelines have been developed to guide teachers, educators or volunteers working in the field of adult education in delivering workshops to recycle and upcycle different kinds of materials, such as metals, wood, paper, plastics, glass, textiles and electronics.

The Methodology previously identified by UPNOWASTE partners outlined the following phases for the implementation of the upcycling workshops:

- Phase 1: Workshop preparation and collection of materials
- Phase 2 Introduction and design of the products
- Phase 3: Design and implementation of the workshop
- Phase 4: Documenting and sharing
- Phase 5: Resources and tools

The following Guidelines have been developed based on the five phases outlined above, which are included in each section corresponding to one material that can be used in upcycling workshops.

At the end of this document, the “Evaluation, valorisation and follow-up” section presents questions and methods that can be used by educators to assess the recycling/upcycling activities that they implemented.

The Annex section includes the “Videos and photos release form”, which collects the participants’ permission for their image, voice, or likeness to be recorded and used.

These Guidelines are intended to be followed by educators to ensure the delivery of high-quality workshops focused on recycling and upcycling materials. They provide a clear framework, practical steps, and recommended actions to help educators plan, facilitate, and evaluate activities effectively, while fostering creativity, environmental awareness, and active participation among learners.

Metals

Phase 1: Workshop preparation and collection of materials

1. Workshop details:

Arrange for a 3- or 4-hour workshop in a shared workshop, FabLab, association or community centre with basic equipment and safety conditions (e.g. ventilation, protective equipment). Groups of maximum 8 adults are ideal, as this allows for individual support and the exchange of experiences.

Icebreaker before starting the workshop: everyone presents the metal object they brought/or they choose and tells/makes up its story.

- Why was it no longer used?
- How might it look tomorrow?

2. Mapping of locally available waste materials:

Identify local sources of metal recycling together to stimulate creativity and anchor the workshop in the participants' daily lives. Invite participants to work together to draw a 'mind map' on the board showing places where metal can be collected.

Each group chooses a category (e.g. cafés, garages, neighbours) and must list at least three specific metal objects that can be found there:

- cafés, bars → aluminium cans;
- garages → bicycle parts;
- charities → donations of used items;
- neighbours/individuals → broken electrical appliances, pots and pans, old tools.

3. Community engagement campaigns to encourage donations of reusable materials:

Organise collections with schools, repair cafés, community centres, eco-friendly third places (e.g. the recycling centre in Paris), youth associations and small businesses. You can also create campaigns, which can include posters, social media posts, or 'metal collection days' by picking up items or opening your premises for people to drop off metal objects.

4. Partnerships with organisations, municipalities or NGOs for material sourcing (indicate what types of organisations to contact):

Build partnerships with municipal sorting and recycling centres, local scrap dealers, NGOs specialising in waste reduction, and vocational colleges/technical schools with extra equipment.

Phase 2: Introduction and design of the products

- **Introductory workshops on upcycling and sustainability:**

Start with a 10- or 15-minute interactive discussion on the benefits of reusing metal: environmental impact, financial savings, creativity and promoting expertise. Highlight that certain metals (such as aluminium) are infinitely recyclable, and that upcycling prevents them from ending up in landfill.

Icebreaker: start with a simple question: what is the last metal object you used today? Write the answers on the board to show that metal is everywhere in our daily lives (can, key, bicycle, kitchen utensil, telephone).

Activity: engaging True or False activity. This interactive exercise encourages participants to reflect more critically on the information, stimulates discussion, and supports better knowledge retention:

- An aluminium can be recycled indefinitely without losing quality → True
- Recycling an aluminium can saves enough energy to charge a smartphone for 5 minutes. → False – In reality, it's equivalent to 3 hours of light bulb power
- The metal from an old bicycle can be turned into aircraft parts → True
- Metal recycling began in the 20th century with the rise of industrialisation → False – The Romans were already recycling their weapons and tools 2,000 years ago
- Approximately 75% of the aluminium produced throughout history is still in use today → True

- **Creative brainstorming sessions to generate upcycling ideas:**

Following the brief introduction, a creative brainstorming activity lasting approximately 15 minutes is proposed. Participants are invited to share their ideas for possible objects or creations made from recycled metals, either verbally or by sketching them quickly. Each participant can also write down or draw their ideas on post-it notes, even the craziest ones, which will then be stuck on an ideas wall. The facilitator then groups the proposals into broad categories such as decoration, jewellery, furniture or art, in order to build a collective map of ideas. To stimulate the imagination, a few examples can be given at the outset:

- Transforming an old pan into a plant pot
- Turning a bike chain into a key holder
- Making candle holders out of aluminium cans
- Repurposing a metal lid into a decorative tray
- Creating decorative lamps from beverage cans

Every idea, no matter how simple or unusual, is valued and can inspire other participants to suggest variations. In addition, a vote system can be organised to identify the group's favourite projects, providing a clear vision of the options to be explored during the rest of the workshop and encouraging everyone to actively participate.

- **Co-design activities:**

Objective of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sorting and evaluating collected materials. - Generating creative ideas. - Developing sketches/prototypes taking into account aesthetic, functional, and environmental criteria.
Materials required:	<p>Collected materials (various metals), flipchart or whiteboard, A3/A4 sheets, felt-tip pens, pencils, post-it notes, stickers, protective gloves if necessary.</p>
Step by step:	<p>1- Sorting and evaluating materials (10–15 mins): Organise a session to sort and evaluate the materials, inviting participants to handle and carefully examine the materials collected. You can give them a simple instruction: Evaluate each material: can it be reused as it is? Can it be transformed? Is it too damaged or dangerous? As the discussion progresses, observations are noted collectively on a board, divided into three separate columns – Usable / To be transformed / Unusable – in order to create a clear and shared vision of each object's potential.</p> <p>2- Sketching and ideation (15–20 min): Each participant chooses one material from those that have been sorted and thinks of one or two ideas for objects that could be created from it. Participants write down their ideas or quickly sketch them on a sheet of paper or post-it notes to make their proposals more concrete and visual. To stimulate the imagination, you can give a few examples: turning a bicycle chain into a key ring, an old saucepan into a plant pot, a tin can into a candle holder, or a metal lid into a decorative tray.</p> <p>3- Presentation and group feedback (10 min): Each group is invited to present their ideas to the rest of the participants. You can then start a group discussion based on three simple but essential criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aesthetics: is the proposal attractive, original, creative? - Functionality: is the imagined object useful, practical and suitable for a specific use? - Environmental impact: does this project really contribute to reducing waste? Is it sustainable over time? This encourages discussion, values everyone's ideas and broadens thinking thanks to feedback from the group.</p> <p>4- Concept selection (5–10 min) Display all proposals, sketches, or ideas on a wall or board so that</p>

	<p>they are visible to all participants and invite them to vote for their favourite projects. The 2–3 ideas that receive the most votes will be selected as priority concepts to be developed during the manufacturing phase. This step allows the entire group to be involved in the final choice and ensures that the selected prototypes generate genuine collective interest.</p>
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Phase 3: Design and implementation of the workshop

5. Use of safe, shared tools:

Before starting, demonstrate how to use the available tools correctly and safely (pliers, hammers, drills, files, metal glue, paint and varnish). The essential instructions are as follows:

- Wear protective equipment (gloves, goggles, aprons).
- Work on stable surfaces and always secure the material before drilling, cutting or hammering.
- Share responsibly: return tools after use and be mindful of others working nearby.
- Ask for help if you are unsure how to use a tool.

6. Hands-on creation of upcycled items:

Each participant chooses a project based on their preferences and the type of metal available. Here are a few ideas to spark your imagination:

- Jewellery → copper wire bracelets, earrings made from nuts, pendants made from small pieces of metal.
- Decorative items → candle holders made from cans, wall hangings made from bicycle parts, hanging mobiles made from recycled metal.
- Practical objects → coat rack with keys or nuts, shelf made from old pipes, coasters made from metal plates.
- Alternative art → small sculptures made from bolts, metal animals, abstract creations.

Don't hesitate to remind the participants that everyone progresses at their own pace, according to their level of comfort. The facilitators circulate to give technical advice (e.g. how to assemble without welding, how to stabilize an object, how to protect metal with varnish).

At the end of the session, a mini-exhibition can be organised: each participant presents their finished (or work-in-progress) item and shares an anecdote about its creation (what was difficult, what was invented along the way). This allows everyone's efforts to be recognised and demonstrates the richness of upcycling in a tangible way.

Phase 4: Documenting and sharing

7. Photographic and video documentation of activities and products:

Throughout the making process, participants (or a designated photographer) document the different stages: brainstorming, prototyping, and final products. Each participant can pose with their creation, and short video interviews can capture their experience, challenges, and satisfaction.

8. Exhibitions, fairs, or showcases to display finished upcycled products:

At the end of the workshop, a small exhibition can be organised in the same venue or in a public community space (e.g. a cultural centre, library, association; such as the one that provided the materials). The products can be displayed with labels describing the origin of the material, the idea behind the creation and the name of the participant (if they agree). To make the event more interactive, a ‘mini design fair’ format can be adopted, where participants explain their process and exchange impressions with visitors. The group can also organise a “vote for your favourite creation” activity to involve the public.

9. Online platforms or social media to promote awareness and outcomes:

Ask the participants to share online the results of the workshop to reach a wider audience and raise awareness of sustainable practices.

Here are some possible actions that you can propose:

- Post photos of the creations with short captions on social media.
- Share before/after posts showing the original material and the final recycled object.
- Post short videos of participants explaining their idea or showing their creative process.
- Create a specific hashtag for the event to group posts together and increase visibility.
- Invite participants to share their creations on their own profiles, tagging the project page.

The goal is not only to celebrate the efforts of participants, but also to inspire other members of the community to rethink waste and explore the creative potential of upcycling.

Phase 5: Resources and Tools

Physical resources	Technical tools	Human resources	Supporting documents
Accessible, safe, and inclusive workshop spaces with a proper ventilation for metalwork	Hand and power tools: drills, saws, grinders, welding machines (if available and safe), riveters	Number of trainers with skills in metal upcycling and safe handling of tools	Templates and guides for metal upcycling projects Instructional posters or manuals on metal

<p>Donated or recovered materials (aluminium cans, steel scraps, bicycle parts, old tools, bolts, kitchenware)</p> <p>Basic tools for metal crafting and repair (pliers, files, hammers, anvils, clamps)</p> <p>Safety gear (gloves, masks, aprons, goggles)</p>	<p>Creative tools: metal cutters, polishing kits, engraving tools, paints and varnishes for metal finishing</p> <p>Equipment for documentation: cameras, phones, tripods</p>	<p>Volunteers or local artisans (repair café experts, metal sculptors) for mentorship</p> <p>Facilitators for group coordination, safety supervision and support</p>	<p>handling and tool safety</p> <p>Access to upcycling case studies and best practices in metal recycling and creative uses</p>
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To go further:

[The different kind of metals that can be recycled](#)

[How to recycle metal waste, a complete guide](#)

[100+ Creative scrap metal art projects](#)

[Making it Work: A reuse and repair toolkit for your reuse organisation.](#)

[Recycling vs upcycling: A guide for common metal household items. Metal Men Recycling.](#)

[From scrap to art: Creative upcycling ideas with recycled metals. Super Metal.](#)

Wood

Phase 1: Workshop preparation and collection of materials

- **Workshop details:**

Arrange a 45-minute workshop in a shared workshop, fabrication laboratory (FabLab), carpentry school, association or community centre with basic equipment and adequate safety conditions (e.g. good ventilation, protective equipment). Groups of up to 8 adults are ideal, as they allow for individual support and the exchange of experiences.

The session begins with an icebreaker, “Wood Memory,” where each person shares an object made of wood that marked their childhood (toy, furniture, tool). This encourages personal connection with the material and sets a collaborative tone.

- **Mapping of locally available waste materials:**

Identify local sources of discarded wood together to stimulate creativity and anchor the workshop in participants' daily lives. Invite participants to create a mind map on the board together, indicating places where usable wood can be found. Divide them into small groups and ask each group to choose a category (e.g. households, construction sites, shops/markets, schools/workshops). For each category, make a list of at least three specific items:

- Households → broken chairs, tables, frames
- Construction sites → pallets, planks, offcuts
- Shops/markets → fruit crates, packaging boxes
- Schools/workshops → discarded furniture, carpentry scraps

This exercise helps participants to relate the activity to familiar environments and generates a shared list of collection points for future projects.

- **Community engagement campaigns to encourage donations of reusable materials:**

Run community campaigns with schools, centres, workshops and shops. Use posters, social media, or “wood collection days” for residents to drop off old furniture, pallets, or offcuts. Local bulky waste collections (“encombrants”), renovation and construction sites and carpentry workshops are also great sources. These initiatives provide materials for creative projects, promote environmental awareness and strengthen local community ties.

- **Partnerships with organisations, municipalities or NGOs for material sourcing:**

Collaborate with recycling centres, carpentry workshops, second-hand shops,

schools, community centres and local NGOs. Also reach out to construction companies, wood suppliers and online donation groups to source discarded or surplus wood efficiently and safely.

Phase 2: Introduction and design of the products

- **Introductory workshops on upcycling and sustainability:**

Start with a 10- or 15-minute interactive discussion on the benefits of reusing wood: environmental impact, saving resources and promoting creativity. Discuss the difference between recycling and upcycling, highlighting how old furniture, pallets or offcuts can gain a second life.

Icebreaker: ask participants to share the last wooden item they used or cherished, linking personal experience to sustainability.

Activity: “Guess the Upcycled Object”

You can create an interactive quiz, like Kahoot, or run it live with participants. Prepare a short presentation where you show each object (photo or real) without explaining its use. You can either provide 4 multiple-choice options or let participants give quick, open answers. At the end, ask participants: “*What did you think it was for?*” Read out the answers given, then show the object’s actual use.

Examples:

- A drawer transformed into a wall shelf
- A wooden clothespin turned into a trivet
- A clothespin used to create a decorative candle holder

- **Creative brainstorming sessions to generate upcycling ideas:**

Duration: 15–20 min

Participants are invited to share ideas for upcycled products using the wood collected during the preparation phase. They can express their ideas by sketching on paper, writing on sticky notes or posting them on a large “ideas wall” visible to all.

Encourage participants to think creatively and consider a wide range of possibilities, including furniture, home décor, practical household items or purely artistic pieces. Once all ideas are collected, you can help group them into categories to give structure and inspire cross-pollination of ideas.

Participants are prompted to discuss why certain designs could work, how they could be built and what materials or techniques would be needed. This collaborative approach stimulates creativity and ensures everyone contributes.

Examples to spark inspiration include:

- transforming an old chair into a small bookshelf
- turning pallet wood into planters or storage crates
- repurposing drawer fronts as wall shelves
- using wooden planks to create decorative wall panels

Additional prompts can encourage participants to think about combining materials, adding personal touches or designing multifunctional objects.

- **Co-design activities:**

Objective of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate and sort collected wood for usability - Generate creative concepts and sketches - Develop prototypes considering aesthetic, functional and environmental criteria
Materials required:	<p>Collected wood, cleaning materials (brushes, cloths, mild detergent), sandpaper, wood filler, pencils, paper, sticky notes, protective gloves, and basic hand tools (screwdrivers, hammers, clamps).</p>
Step by step:	<p>1- Sorting and evaluating materials (15 min): participants examine the collected wood, identifying pieces that are usable as is, those that require minor repairs, and those that are unsuitable. Before evaluation, participants clean the wood to remove dust, dirt, or residues, and sand rough or splintered surfaces as needed, ensuring a safe and workable material. Your role will be to guide them in checking for cracks, rot, or splinters. Observations are recorded on a table with three columns: Usable / Needs repair / Unusable. This step ensures that everyone understands the potential of each piece of material.</p> <p>2- Sketching and conceptualisation (20 mins): each participant selects one or more pieces of wood and sketches ideas for potential recycled products. Sticky notes or sheets of paper are used for drawings or brief descriptions. Encourage experimentation and remind participants to consider functionality, aesthetics and environmental impact. Participants can move around to see each other's ideas, which promotes inspiration and collaboration, or browse for specific ideas online,</p> <p>3- Group discussion and feedback (15 min): participants present their sketches and ideas to the group. The discussion focuses on feasibility, visual appeal, and sustainability. Encourage constructive feedback, ask participants what materials or techniques might be used, and highlight innovative solutions.</p>

	<p>The group votes on a few concepts to develop further.</p> <p>4- Planning the prototype development (20 mins): the selected ideas are discussed with a view to the next phase: practical creation. Participants draw up a list of the materials, tools and steps needed to create the prototypes. The focus is on safety, sustainability and maximum reuse of the wood collected. This step establishes a clear roadmap for transforming the concepts into tangible recycled products.</p>
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Phase 3: Design and implementation of the workshop

- Use of safe, shared tools:

Before beginning practical activities, give a clear demonstration of all tools, including hand saws, hammers, screwdrivers, pliers, sandpaper and small drills. Participants are encouraged to always wear protective equipment: gloves, goggles, and aprons. Emphasis is placed on maintaining a stable workspace, checking tools before use, and handling materials with care. Rules to follow include asking for help when in doubt, keeping fingers away from sharp edges, and using pliers to hold wood in place. Tools must be returned after use, shared respectfully, and participants must remain attentive to others working nearby. Circulate to ensure safety, offer advice, and provide support to beginners and experienced creators alike. Do not hesitate to mark off high-risk areas, such as around saws or workbenches, with signs or floor markings, and clearly display instructions for using each tool to ensure everyone's safety.

- Hands-on creation of upcycled items:

Participants select pieces of reclaimed wood to create their creative recycling projects. They put the ideas generated during a brainstorming session into practice, using basic hand tools such as screwdrivers, hammers, pliers, sandpaper and wood glue. Before starting, participants clean the wood to remove dust, dirt, or residues, ensuring a safe and smooth surface for sanding and assembly.

Projects can range from functional items such as small shelves, planters or coat racks to decorative items such as wall panels, photo frames or artistic sculptures. Feel free to circulate among the participants to provide advice on techniques, safety and problem solving. The emphasis is on creativity, complete reuse of materials and innovative combinations of pieces of wood. Participants are encouraged to sand, assemble and finish their objects with care, taking into account aesthetics, stability and durability, without forgetting safety, which remains a priority. Gloves and protective eyewear must be worn, and risk areas must be clearly marked.

At the end of the session, participants can display their creations in a mini-exhibition within the workshop, sharing the process and inspiration behind each object. This hands-on approach reinforces practical skills while promoting

collaboration, creativity and environmental awareness through wood recycling.

Phase 4: Documenting and sharing

- **Photographic and video documentation of activities and products:**

Participants document each stage of the workshop process using cameras or smartphones. Photos and short videos capture the sorting of materials, sketches, prototyping and finished objects. You can also invite participants to conduct video interviews to share their ideas, challenges and creative choices.

- **Exhibitions, fairs, or showcases to display finished upcycled products:**

Organise a mini-exhibition in the workshop or in a local community space, displaying each of the recycled objects with the name of its creator(s) and the original material (or object). Visitors can interact with participants, ask questions and vote for their favourite creations, creating an engaging and participatory experience while showcasing the creativity and potential of recycled wood.

- **Online platforms or social media to promote awareness and outcomes.**

Promote the workshop and creations online using social media posts, reels, or short videos. Use a specific hashtag to group all content. Encourage participants to share their own photos and experiences, tagging the project page. Share behind-the-scenes moments, before-and-after transformations, and highlight the creative potential of upcycling to reach a wider audience.

Phase 5: Resources and Tools

Physical resources	Technical tools	Human resources	Supporting documents
<p>Accessible, safe, and inclusive workshop spaces with proper ventilation.</p> <p>Donated or recovered materials: aluminium cans, steel scraps, bicycle parts, old tools, bolts, kitchenware, etc.</p> <p>Basic metalworking tools: pliers, files, hammers, anvils, clamps.</p> <p>Safety gear: gloves, masks, aprons, goggles.</p> <p>Hand and power tools: drills, saws, heat guns, sewing machines (if needed).</p> <p>Creative tools: stencils, design software (optional), adhesives, paint.</p> <p>Equipment for documentation: cameras, smartphones, tripods.</p>	<p>Hand and power tools: saws, sanders, drills, screwdrivers, hammers, clamps, chisels, mallets.</p> <p>Creative tools: stencils, wood carving tools, paint, brushes, wood glue, varnish, markers for design.</p> <p>Documentation equipment: cameras, smartphones, tripods, or any devices for photos/videos of the workshop and creations.</p>	<p>Trainers with expertise in woodwork, upcycling, and safe handling of hand and power tools.</p> <p>Volunteers or local artisans (carpenters, woodworkers, makerspaces experts) to provide guidance and mentorship.</p> <p>Facilitators to coordinate groups, supervise safety, and support participants during creative activities.</p>	<p>Templates and guides for wood upcycling projects, including step-by-step instructions for common techniques.</p> <p>Instructional posters or manuals on safe handling of woodworking tools and materials.</p> <p>Access to case studies and best practices in wood recycling, creative reuse, and sustainable furniture or décor projects.</p>

To go further:

[Creative wood recycling art ideas](#)

[Simple scrap wood projects for beginners. DIY Craft Nest.](#)

[A guide to upcycling wooden furniture for beginners.](#)

[Beginners guide to upcycling furniture.](#)

[Upcycling For Beginners Tips.](#)

[Woodworking projects, upcycling, using scrap wood.](#)

[Beginner's Guide to Upcycling.](#)

Plastics

Phase 1: Workshop preparation and collection of materials

- **Workshop details:**

Organise a 3- or 4-hour workshop in shared premises located at associations or adult education centres, which have been verified to comply with all health and safety regulations for shared workplaces. Groups of up to 10-12 adults are ideal for effective training, as they allow for individual support and the exchange of experiences.

The session begins with a brief presentation of the participants and their interest in the topic of environmental sustainability and, in particular, plastic upcycling.

- **Mapping of locally available waste materials:**

Invite participants to map out places where they can find plastic that can be upcycled. This activity stimulates participants' curiosity and creativity. Divide participants into small groups and invite them to create a mind map on the board indicating the areas where plastic can be found.

- Domestic: bottles, flasks, food trays, caps, plastic bags
- Commercial: grocery stores (packaging, plastic fruit crates), bars and restaurants (PET bottles, ice cream tubs), clothing stores (plastic hangers), stationery shops or printers (transparent plastic wrappers)
- Craft: workshops and craft studios (protective packaging, plastic components), small businesses (production waste or defective prototypes), logistics warehouses (packaging film, cable ties)
- Public places: recycling centres, parks/beaches/countryside (scattered plastic, to be collected in environmental activities)

- **Community engagement campaigns to encourage donations of reusable materials:**

Create a poster or social media post with the slogan:

'Don't throw it away, adopt it! Bring your plastic and let's transform it together.'

Set up a physical collection point (a transparent box or decorated bin). Each donor deposits plastic and receives a "creative token" in return to use in the workshop (to choose a colour, decoration or accessory). This activity makes collective participation visible.

Before the workshop, organise a mini-demonstration: take some bottle tops, bottles or plastic crates and quickly show what can be made. People will be intrigued and motivated to bring their own plastic.

- **Partnerships with organisations, municipalities or NGOs for material sourcing**

Social cooperatives, environmental associations involved in cleaning up plastic waste in the area, trade associations will be contacted in order to spread the message more widely, as well as community centres, schools and neighbourhood committees.

Phase 2: Introduction and design of the products

- **Introductory workshops on upcycling and sustainability:**

An initial interactive discussion with the group, lasting 10–15 minutes, will cover:

-the positive impact of upcycling in general: reducing waste, enhancing what already exists, stimulating creativity;

-the difference between recycling and upcycling, with some examples: recycling=transforming a material to obtain raw materials (e.g. plastic → granules) upcycling=giving new life and greater value to an object without destroying it (e.g. bottle → lamp, bottle caps → mosaic).

Icebreaker: You can start with a simple question.

'Who among you has ever tried to give an object a second life instead of throwing it away?'

What is the most creative thing you would like to build? And what type of plastic would you use?

The answers to the second question will be written on post-it notes and then compared with what was created at the end of the workshop.

Activity: "Map of ideas"

On a whiteboard or a new poster, write "Plastic → ?" in the centre.

Each participant writes on a post-it note what can be done with used plastic (recycling, reuse, upcycling). In a few minutes, a collective map of ideas is created, which will then be linked to the practical workshop.

To stimulate creativity, show examples of upcycling plastic bottles and caps:

- Plastic bottles → handcrafted lamp, desk mobile phone holder, plastic flowers
- Caps → mosaic, fridge magnets, board game pieces

- Creative brainstorming sessions to generate upcycling ideas:

After the introduction, there is a 'Free generation of ideas' session lasting about 10 minutes.

The participants are divided into small groups and given post-it notes and markers. A brainstorming session is proposed with the following rules: 1. All ideas are valid, 2. No criticism, only additions, 3. The more ideas given, the better.

The groups write one idea per sticky note → then stick them on a shared board.

The ideas described may stimulate others, which will be written on other sticky notes to be stuck on the board. Once all the ideas have been collected, you can help them group them into categories to give them structure and inspire mutual contamination of ideas.

This collaborative approach stimulates creativity and ensures that everyone contributes.

To stimulate creativity, you can show examples of upcycling different plastic objects such as bottles, caps and coloured plastic bags.

- Co-design activities:

Objective of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transform waste into useful, decorative or artistic objects. - Stimulate creativity and collaboration. - Stimulate collective responsibility towards sustainability.
Materials required:	<p>Sturdy scissors and craft knives, hot glue and replacement sticks, tape, coloured adhesive tape, washi tape, permanent markers and acrylic paints, string, metal wire, elastic bands, wool weaving needles, card, backing for gluing, A3 sheets, post-it notes, pencils, pens.</p> <p>Collected plastic (bottles, caps, trays, bags, etc.)</p> <p>Lightweight protective gloves, safety goggles, apron</p>
Step by step:	<p>1 - Collection and selection of material (15 minutes)</p> <p>All collected plastic must be washed and dried before use, excluding containers that have contained hazardous chemicals, burnt or overly fragile plastic, and objects with sharp edges that cannot be handled safely. The material is organised into separate containers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -PET bottles (transparent and coloured). -Caps (sorted by colour, if possible). -Rigid plastic (crates, thick containers). -Bags and films (separated by colour/thickness).

	<p>2 - Sketches and Concept Design (20 minutes).</p> <p>First, explain that the “concept” is the starting point: what do I want to create, what is it for, how do I imagine it? You don't need to be able to draw well → simple marks, arrows and colours are enough. Get the participants to work in pairs or small teams. Each group prepares 2–3 sketches on different ideas, also adding the necessary materials and any possible difficulties they foresee. Hang the sheets on the wall to create a mini concept gallery where everyone can look at them and add comments with post-it notes (e.g. I would add..., what if we used...).</p> <p>3 - Presentation and group feedback (10 minutes)</p> <p>Each group will present their projects by sharing: -Starting object: bottle, caps, bag, etc. -Upcycling idea: what it becomes and why. -Sketch: show the design. -Added value: what makes the idea useful, creative or sustainable. After each presentation, the facilitator will solicit feedback from participants by asking questions such as “<i>What did you like most about this idea?</i>”, “<i>What variations can we imagine?</i>” and asking them to give two positive comments and one suggestion for improvement. The involvement of the class, in addition to providing feedback, enhances everyone's ideas</p> <p>4 - Concept selection (10 minutes)</p> <p>The concepts displayed in the ‘concept gallery’ must be chosen not only because they are appealing, but also in relation to their creativity, usefulness and feasibility. Based on these criteria, participants will give their assessment using a traffic light colour system: Green: feasible immediately; Yellow: interesting but needs improvement; Red: too complex. Green, yellow and red post-it notes will be distributed for voting. Voting, involving the entire group, ensures that the prototypes selected are those that generate real interest.</p>
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Phase 3: Design and implementation of the workshop

- Use of safe, shared tools

Before starting, it is essential to give clear practical and, above all, safety instructions on the tools available (hot glue, cutter, hand drill or mini electric drill, hand saw) and demonstrate how to use them.

Participants will be asked to use personal protective equipment: light gloves, safety goggles, a mask (if cutting plastic or sanding) and an apron or smock to protect their clothes from glue and paint. For safety reasons, a table will be set up for “special tools” such as hot glue, drill and hacksaw, so that tools are not scattered around. The work will be divided into zones: a “safe” zone where cutting with scissors and preparing decorations takes place, and a zone for more delicate operations (hot gluing, drilling, etc.).

At the end, hang a poster with icons of the tools and safety rules as a visual reminder during the workshop.

- **Hands-on creation of upcycled items**

Each participant chooses a project based on their preferences and the type of material available. Some ideas can be presented to stimulate creativity:

- Functional objects for the home or school: pen holders, desk organisers, plant pots, decorated containers, etc.
- Simple accessories and toys: necklaces made from bottle caps, puppets, etc.

Decorations and creative art: flowers, lamps, mosaics, etc.

Participants will be reminded that everyone has their own manual skills and pace of work, and attention will be paid to each person's difficulties, providing support and monitoring the progress of the work.

At the end, each participant will present their work, even if incomplete, illustrating the difficulties encountered and the solutions adopted. This will allow all participants to acquire further knowledge.

Phase 4: Documenting and sharing

- **Photographic and video documentation of activities and products:**

During the course of the work, participants or the facilitator will use photographs to document the stages of the product creation process (from raw materials to intermediate processing stages to the finished product). Videos of the processing stages may be made, including interviews with the participants involved.

These activities serve not only to show the result, but also to convey the attention to detail and craftsmanship involved.

- **Exhibitions, fairs, or showcases to display finished upcycled products:**

At the end of the workshop, an exhibition of the participants' work will be held at the same venue.

Each product will be displayed with a label explaining the origin of the material, the idea behind the type of object to be made, and the purpose of the finished product.

This exhibition may be held at the same time as other craft-related events in the same area.

- **Online platforms or social media to promote awareness and outcomes**

Encourage participants to share their results online to reach a wider audience.

Some ideas:

- Storytelling the activities
- Before & after → photos of the piece of plastic used at the start alongside the finished product.
- Posts with narrative captions → tell the story of the material (e.g. “these bottles have become flowers”).
- Clips of workshop participants discussing, sketching or collaborating.
- Engage the community with polls in stories: Which prototype do you prefer? A or B?
- Green hashtags: #Upcycling #Plastic #EcoDesign #ZeroWaste

Phase 5: Resources and Tools

Physical resources	Technical tools	Human resources	Supporting documents
<p>Safe and inclusive accessible workshop spaces with adequate ventilation for plastic processing.</p> <p>Donated or recovered materials (transparent and coloured PET bottles, caps, rigid plastic: crates, thick containers), bags and films.</p> <p>Safety gear (gloves, goggles, aprons, masks)</p>	<p>Hand and power tools: Sturdy scissors</p> <p>Cutter knife with cutting mat</p> <p>Awl or small nail for making small holes in caps</p> <p>Hand saw (for jerry cans or hard plastic)</p> <p>Small pliers (for bending or securing parts)</p> <p>Rulers, set squares, compasses</p> <p>Hot glue with electric gun, mini drill or screwdriver</p> <p>Light sander, heat gun or hot soldering iron</p> <p>Documentation equipment: cameras, phones, tripods</p>	<p>Number of trainers with expertise in plastic upcycling and safe use of tools.</p> <p>Volunteers and artisans (eco-artists).</p> <p>Facilitators to coordinate activities, provide support and monitor safety</p>	<p>Templates and guides for plastic upcycling projects.</p> <p>Posters or educational manuals on plastic handling and tool safety</p> <p>Access to case studies on upcycling and best practices for recycling and creative use of plastic</p>

To go further:

[Make it precious. Start a business from plastic waste!](#)

[Plastics for Change: changing lives through recycling](#)

[Plastic Upcycling: A step-by-step tutorial](#)

[Plastic bottle crafts & plastic upcycling crafts](#)

[20 DIY Ideas for Upcycling Plastic Waste at Home](#)

Paper

Phase 1: Workshop preparation and collection of materials

- **Workshop details:**

Plan a 3-hour workshop in a library, classroom, or makerspace with good lighting and large tables. Groups of 8–10 participants allow peer-to-peer learning. As an opening activity, each participant presents a paper item they brought (old magazine, packaging, notebook) and shares its past use and potential new life.

- **Mapping of locally available waste materials:**

Guide participants to brainstorm places where paper waste accumulates daily: cafés and offices (receipts, coffee cup sleeves, invoices), schools (notebooks, exam sheets), households (egg cartons, cereal boxes), and shops (wrapping paper, leaflets). Each group identifies three items and suggests creative reuse ideas.

- **Community engagement campaigns to encourage donations of reusable materials:**

Partner with schools, bookshops, copy centres, and youth clubs to collect leftover or misprinted paper. Promote “Paper Reuse Weeks” with drop-off points and interactive challenges such as making art from donated magazines. Partner with organisations, municipalities or NGOs for material sourcing: build partnerships with municipal sorting and recycling centres, local scrap dealers, NGOs specialising in waste reduction, and vocational colleges/technical schools with extra equipment.

Phase 2: Introduction and design of the products

- **Introductory workshops on upcycling and sustainability:**

Start with a lively 10-minute discussion: “How many paper items did you use today?” Participants often list tickets, packaging, receipts, or books. This shows the paper's centrality in daily life. Introduce key facts: paper fibres can only be recycled 5–7 times before degrading, but upcycling offers endless creative uses; recycling one ton of paper saves around 17 trees and 26 000 Liters of water. Then propose a short quiz:

- Cardboard is not recyclable. → False

- Recycling one notebook saves one litre of water. → False (much more)
 - Handmade paper has existed since ancient China. → True
- **Creative brainstorming sessions to generate upcycling ideas:**

Run a 15-minute creative storming session where everyone sketches or writes down unusual paper reuse ideas: transforming cardboard boxes into modular furniture, weaving magazines into baskets, folding origami lampshades, crafting seed paper postcards, or making handmade sketchbooks. Stick all ideas on a wall, cluster them into themes (functional, decorative, artistic), and encourage voting for favourites. This collaborative “idea gallery” fuels imagination and group ownership.

- **Co-design activities:**

Objective of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate collected paper for reuse. - Generate and visualise creative solutions. - Develop prototypes that combine aesthetics, usefulness, and environmental benefit.
Materials required:	Scrap paper, cardboard, magazines, cutting mats, scissors, rulers, glue, staplers, markers, aprons.
Step by step:	<p>1- Sorting and evaluating materials (10–15 mins): Participants categorise items: intact and ready-to-use (e.g., cardboard sheets), transformable (damaged covers, flyers), or unsuitable (greasy pizza boxes). A group chart visualises results.</p> <p>2 - Sketching (15–20 mins): Each person selects one type of paper and proposes a product design through a sketch or quick prototype mock-up.</p> <p>3 - Sharing & Discussion (10 mins): Ideas are presented and discussed. Criteria include: Is it appealing? Does it work in practice? Does it extend the material’s life?</p> <p>4 - Selection (5–10 mins): Participants collectively vote for the 2–3 ideas to develop further. This ensures democratic decision-making and builds motivation for the next phase.</p>

Phase 3: Design and implementation of the workshop

- Use of safe, shared tools:

Facilitators explain correct handling of scissors, cutters, glue sticks, staplers, and rulers.

Key tips:

- Always cut on a mat to protect tables.
- Keep blades away from the body and fingers.
- Apply glue sparingly to prevent slipping hazards.
- Share equipment responsibly and return tools promptly.
- Ask for guidance when trying a new folding or binding technique.

Hands-on creation of upcycled items:

Participants now transform sketches into tangible objects. Suggested pathways:

Functional: handmade notebooks from single-sided sheets, organisers from cereal boxes, or seed paper for planting.

Decorative: origami lampshades, collages, paper flowers, or woven baskets.

Artistic: papier-mâché masks, sculptures, or mixed-media canvases.

The atmosphere should encourage exploration and play, not perfection. A mini-exhibition at the end lets participants showcase and narrate their creative process, reinforcing pride and community connection.

Phase 4: Documenting and sharing

- Photographic and video documentation of activities and products:

Nominate participants to capture short clips and photos of each step—sorting, design, creation, and final exhibition. The result becomes a shared visual diary of the workshop.

- Exhibitions, fairs, or showcases to display finished upcycled products:

Host a “Paper Reborn” showcase in a library, gallery, or school. Label each piece with its material origin and creator. Add interactive voting or a “most surprising reuse” award to engage visitors.

- Online platforms or social media to promote awareness and outcomes:

Fresh ways to bring the workshop alive online:

- **The “Paper’s Second Life” Feed:**
Curate a vibrant digital gallery where every post introduces a piece with a tiny backstory – “This cereal box lived on a kitchen shelf for four months. Today, it’s a handmade sketchbook.”
Small narratives make big impressions.
- **Transformation Reels:**
Create short, snappy videos showing the material’s journey in three beats: Before → Process → Final Creation.
These quick reels or TikToks turn recycling into visual magic.
- **Micro-Interviews With Makers:**
Film participants answering one simple question in under 10 seconds: “What surprised you most while working with waste paper?”
The honest, unscripted answers make sustainability feel human and relatable.

Phase 5: Resources and Tools

Physical resources	Technical tools	Human resources	Supporting documents
<p>Workshop tables, cutting mats, safe spaces.</p> <p>Donated or recovered materials (Discarded newspapers, magazines, packaging cardboard, flyers, notebooks...)</p> <p>Basic tools for paper (Scissors, cutters, staplers, rulers, glue, tape, paint.)</p> <p>Safety gear (Aprons, gloves for cutters/glue guns)</p>	<p>Creative tools: Scissors, cutters, staplers, rulers, glue, tape, paint</p> <p>Equipment for documentation: cameras, phones, tripods</p>	<p>Number of trainers with skills in paper upcycling and safe handling of tools</p> <p>Volunteers or local artisans (repair café experts, paper sculptors) for mentorship</p> <p>Facilitators for group coordination, safety supervision and support</p>	<p>Templates and guides for paper upcycling projects</p> <p>Instructional posters or manuals on paper handling and tool safety</p> <p>Access to upcycling case studies and best practices in paper recycling and creative uses</p>

To go further:

[Monitoring report 2022 European Declaration on Paper Recycling:](#)

[Handmade paper: a review of its history craft and science:](#)

[Upcycle Paper Products into Plantable Seed Paper:](#)

[A video on making recycled paper at home](#)

[How to make paper mache items at home:](#)

[Paper bricks made of recycled paper:](#)

[Tips on how to upcycle various materials including paper \(in Hungarian\)](#)

Textiles

Phase 1: Workshop preparation and collection of materials

- **Workshop details:**

Arrange for a 3- or 4-hour session in a shared workshop, fabrication laboratory (FabLab), association, or community centre with basic textile equipment (tables, sewing machines, scissors, cutting mats, ironing boards) and safety conditions (good lighting, proper ventilation for fabric paints, non-toxic dyes). Groups of maximum 8–10 adults are ideal, allowing for individual support and exchange of experiences.

Icebreaker before starting the workshop: everyone presents the textile item they brought (a T-shirt, scarf, pair of jeans, piece of fabric, bag, etc.) and tells or invents its story.

- Why was it no longer used?
- What memories are linked to it?
- How could it live a new life tomorrow?

- **Mapping of locally available waste materials:**

Identify local sources of textile waste together to stimulate creativity and anchor the workshop in participants' daily lives. Invite participants to create a collective 'mind map' on the board showing places where textile materials can be found. Each group chooses a category (e.g. clothing shops, households, schools, hotels) and must list at least three specific textile items:

- clothing shops → unsold or damaged garments, leftover fabrics
- schools → old uniforms, gym clothes, curtains from classrooms
- hotels → discarded linens, towels, tablecloths
- households/neighbours → worn-out jeans, shirts, bed sheets, curtains

- **Community engagement campaigns to encourage donations of reusable materials:**

Organise textile collection drives with schools, repair cafés, community sewing groups, community centres, second-hand shops, and youth associations. Campaigns can include posters, social media posts, or "textile drop-off days" where people can bring unwanted clothes and fabrics. You can also arrange for a collection box in visible places such as libraries or cultural centres.

- **Partnerships with organisations, municipalities or NGOs for material sourcing:**

Build partnerships with municipal recycling centres, local second-hand shops (e.g. Humana, charity shops), NGOs specialising in circular fashion and waste reduction, and vocational schools with textile/sewing departments. Local theatres or hotels may also donate costumes, curtains, or linens.

Phase 2: Introduction and design of the products

- **Introductory workshops on upcycling and sustainability:**

Start with a 10- or 15-minute interactive discussion on the benefits of reusing textiles: reducing landfill waste, saving water and energy from new production and fostering creativity. Highlight that textiles have a strong emotional value and can be transformed into unique, long-lasting items.

Icebreaker:

Ask: What is the last textile item you bought or used today? (e.g. shirt, bag, shoes, towel). Write the answers on the board to show that textiles surround us in every moment of our daily lives.

Activity – True or False:

- Producing one cotton T-shirt requires about 2,700 litres of water → True
- Clothes that are donated are always reused in the same country → False – many are exported abroad
- Old jeans can be transformed into bags, cushions, or even insulation material → True
- The fashion industry contributes less than 1% of global emissions → False – it contributes around 8–10%
- Extending the life of clothing by 9 months reduces its environmental impact by 20–30% → True

- **Creative brainstorming sessions to generate upcycling ideas:**

After the introduction, hold a 15-minute creative brainstorming session. Participants are invited to share their ideas for objects or creations made from old textiles, either verbally or by sketching them quickly. They can also use post-it notes to write or draw ideas and place them on an “ideas wall.” The facilitator groups the ideas into categories such as fashion, home decoration, accessories, toys and art.

Examples to inspire participants:

- Turning old jeans into tote bags or laptop sleeves
- Transforming T-shirts into shopping bags
- Using leftover fabric scraps to make patchwork cushions or quilts
- Repurposing shirts into aprons
- Creating textile jewellery or fabric flowers for decoration

- **Co-design activities:**

Objective of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sorting and evaluating collected textiles - Generating creative ideas - Developing sketches/prototypes considering aesthetics, functionality, and sustainability.
Materials required	<p>Collected textiles, scissors, sewing kits, cutting mats, flipchart/whiteboard, A3/A4 sheets, felt pens, post-it notes, stickers, pins, needles, fabric glue.</p>
Step by step	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sorting and evaluating materials (10–15 mins): Participants examine the textiles and categorise them into Usable as-is / To be transformed / Unusable. This helps define the creative potential of each piece. 2. Sketching and ideation (15–20 mins): Each participant selects a textile item and sketches 1–2 ideas for upcycling it. Examples: making a cushion from a sweater, a wallet from old jeans, a patchwork bag from fabric scraps. 3. Presentation and group feedback (10 mins): Participants present their ideas, which are evaluated collectively on three criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aesthetic: Is it attractive, original? ● Functional: Is it practical and useful? ● Sustainable: Does it extend the life of textiles and reduce waste? 4. Concept selection (5–10 mins): All ideas are displayed, and participants vote for 2–3 priority projects to develop further.

Phase 3: Design and implementation of the workshop

- Use of safe, shared tools:

Before starting, the trainer demonstrates the correct and safe use of textile tools (scissors, rotary cutters, needles, sewing machines, irons, fabric glue, non-toxic dyes). Instructions include:

- Use sharp tools carefully and return them after use.
- Keep work surfaces tidy and safe.
- Share sewing machines responsibly; ask for assistance if unsure.
- Use protective gear when dyeing or using fabric paints.

- Hands-on creation of upcycled items:

Participants choose a project depending on their interests and the materials available. Some examples:

- Garments: patchwork T-shirts, redesigned jeans, embellished jackets
- Accessories: tote bags, pencil cases, wallets, laptop sleeves, fabric jewellery
- Home items: cushion covers, patchwork blankets, curtains, rugs, fabric baskets
- Decorative art: textile wall hangings, fabric flowers, textile collages

Facilitators circulate to provide technical guidance (e.g. how to sew thicker fabrics, simple patterns without sewing, how to stabilise fabric with glue or backing).

At the end of the session, a mini-exhibition is held: each participant presents their finished (or in-progress) piece and shares their creative process.

Phase 4: Documenting and sharing

- Photographic and video documentation of activities and products:

Participants (or a designated photographer) capture each step: sorting, brainstorming, sketching, and finished products. Short video interviews record their reflections on challenges, discoveries, and satisfaction.

- Exhibitions, fairs, or showcases to display finished upcycled products:

At the end of the workshop, organise a small exhibition in the same venue or in a public community space (e.g. cultural centre, library, or shop window). Each item is displayed with a tag describing its material origin, transformation idea, and (if agreed) the participant's name. To involve the community, you could organise a "vote for your favourite creation" activity.

- **Online platforms or social media to promote awareness and outcomes:**
Share workshop results online to reach a wider audience and raise awareness of textile upcycling. Actions can include:
 - Posting before/after photos of textiles and their transformation
 - Sharing short videos of the making process
 - Creating a dedicated hashtag for the workshop (e.g. #UpNoWasteTextiles)
 - Encouraging participants to post their own creations and stories, tagging the project page
 - Posting short “how-to” clips to inspire others

The goal is not only to celebrate the efforts of participants, but also to inspire other members of the community to rethink waste and explore the creative potential of upcycling.

Phase 5: Resources and Tools

Physical resources	Technical tools	Human resources	Supporting documents
<p>Accessible, safe, and inclusive workshop spaces with good lighting and proper ventilation (especially for dyeing or painting fabrics)</p> <p>Donated or recovered textile materials (clothes, bed linen, towels, curtains, fabric scraps, unsold garments from shops, hotel linens)</p> <p>Basic tools for textile crafting and repair (scissors, rotary cutters,</p>	<p>Sewing machines (domestic and, if possible, industrial for thicker fabrics)</p> <p>Hand tools: seam rippers, embroidery hoops, fabric glue, staple guns</p> <p>Creative tools: fabric paints, stencils, stamps, natural dyes, embellishments (buttons, zippers, ribbons)</p> <p>Equipment for documentation: cameras, smartphones, tripods for photo/video recording</p>	<p>Trainers with skills in sewing, textile repair, upcycling, and creative design</p> <p>Volunteers or local artisans (tailors, fashion designers, textile artists, repair café members) for mentorship</p> <p>Facilitators for group coordination, safety supervision, and technical support</p>	<p>Templates and sewing patterns for basic upcycling projects (tote bags, cushion covers, wallets, aprons)</p> <p>Instructional posters or manuals on safe tool use (scissors, sewing machines, dye handling)</p> <p>Access to case studies, inspirational guides, and best practices in textile recycling and creative reuse</p>

<p>sewing kits, pins, needles, measuring tapes, ironing boards)</p> <p>Safety gear (finger protectors, gloves for cutting or dyeing, aprons, non-toxic dyes/paints)</p>			<p>Step-by-step visual guides (e.g. simple “no-sew” methods, patchwork techniques)</p>
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To go further:

[Textile zero waste workshops: Using fabric leftover to create public workshops](#)

[12 Online Upcycling Courses for Getting Creative at Home](#)

[“Make do and Mend” Online Workshops by Veolia Nottinghamshire – Free online textile reuse and repair workshops, with how-to guides to follow along](#)

[“22 Unique and Fun Upcycling Clothes Projects” on UpcycleMyStuff.com – A beginner-friendly guide with creative project ideas](#)

[Wunderlabel’s “13 Upcycling Ideas for Leftover Fabric Scraps” – Practical inspirations for turning scraps into patchwork quilts, toys, bags, and more](#)

[TextileArtist.org’s “Recycling in Textile Art: Five Artists” – Showcases how artists use discarded fabrics and materials to create art with environmental impact](#)

Glass

Phase 1: Workshop preparation and collection of materials

- **Workshop details:**

A 3-hour immersive workshop hosted at a community makerspace or vocational training classroom, with around 20 participants. The workshop is structured to balance theory, practice, and creativity.

Icebreaker activity: "Two Truths and a Recycled Lie." Each participant shares two true facts about themselves and one fictional fact related to recycling or glass. The group votes to guess the lie. This helps participants relax, connect, and set the theme. This breaks the ice and subtly introduces the theme

- **Mapping of locally available waste materials:**

Participants work in groups to brainstorm where glass bottles are disposed of in their community. They are encouraged to think about:

- Local restaurants, cafes, bars, and hotels that regularly dispose of bottles (wine, whisky, beer).
- Households that generate decorative or unique bottles.
- Event venues or catering services that use high volumes of beverages.
- Students from schools and their houses
- Each group prepares a mind map of potential collection sources, considering feasibility, transport, and existing partnerships. They then present to the whole group, creating a shared "community glass map". This ensures sustainability beyond the workshop.
- Group brainstorming to list bars, restaurants, hotels, and households that frequently dispose of glass bottles. Participants create a mind map of potential collection points for whisky, wine, and beverage bottles.

- **Community engagement campaigns to encourage donations of reusable materials:**

Community campaigns are essential to secure a steady flow of bottles. Suggested activities:

Launch a "Bring a Bottle, Build a Future" campaign through local schools and community centres.

Place decorated collection bins at cafés, bars, and libraries.

Use social media and local radio to encourage households to donate unusual or beautiful bottles.

Partner with eco-conscious Facebook groups to announce monthly 'Bottle Drives'

where residents can drop off bottles in exchange for participation certificates or small tokens of appreciation.

Contact local bars, cafés, restaurants, and hotels to encourage donations of used bottles. Run a small campaign through schools and community centres to collect decorative or unique bottles from households. Partner with community boards and eco-conscious Facebook groups to announce a "Bottle Drive," asking residents to donate clean and interesting glass containers for a creative community project.

- **Partnerships with organisations, municipalities or NGOs for material sourcing:**

Municipal waste departments, recycling NGOs, hospitality associations, schools, universities, environmental clubs, and local artists' collectives. These partners not only supply materials but also help promote awareness of sustainable practices.

Phase 2: Introduction and design of the products

- **Introductory workshops on upcycling and sustainability:**

The workshop begins with the guiding question: "What happens to our glass bottles after the bin?" This leads into a discussion on recycling vs. upcycling. Key points covered:

- Glass is 100% recyclable and can be recycled infinitely without quality loss.
- Recycling glass requires energy-intensive melting, while upcycling allows direct reuse with minimal energy.

Environmental impact: recycling one glass bottle saves enough energy to power a 100W light bulb for 4 hours. Upcycling saves even more by skipping transportation and processing.

Interactive activity: a short true/false quiz. Examples:

- 'Glass can be recycled endlessly without losing quality' (True).
- 'Upcycling always costs more energy than recycling' (False).
- 'Every ton of recycled glass saves over 300kg of CO2 emissions' (True).

This activity encourages participants to reflect critically on sustainability and motivates them to embrace creative reuse. Trainers then show inspiring examples: drinking glasses, lamps, planters, mosaics—all made from bottles.

- **Creative brainstorming sessions to generate upcycling ideas:**

Activity: "Glass Transformation Brainstorm" (30 minutes).

Step 1: divide participants into groups of 4–5. Give each group one empty bottle.

Step 2: Round 1 (10 min): write or sketch as many wild ideas as possible—no judgment. Ideas may include: lamps, terrariums, wind chimes, glasses, soap dispensers, or chandeliers.

Step 3: Round 2 (10 min): groups review and refine, selecting their 3 best ideas based on creativity, functionality, and feasibility.

Step 4: Sharing (10 min): each group pitches their ideas to the room. The facilitator collects them on a whiteboard, creating a shared idea pool.

Outcome: a collective portfolio of feasible and imaginative projects to be explored in the prototyping stage.

- **Co-design activities:**

Objective of the activity	Explore creative possibilities of reusing bottles. Evaluate usability, safety, and sustainability of designs. Develop simple prototypes balancing aesthetics and function.
Materials required:	Clean bottles, Masking tape, Cutting tools (glass cutter, bottle cutter jig), Sandpaper, Protective gloves/Goggles, Paints, Etching cream, Adhesive, LED string lights, Ropes
Step by step:	<p>1 - Sorting (20 mins): participants sort bottles by colour, size, shape, and uniqueness. They also check for cracks or defects.</p> <p>2 - Sketching (30 mins): in groups, participants draw possible product designs (tumblers, lamps, vases, plant holders).</p> <p>3 - Prototype preparation (60 mins): guided by trainers, bottles are cut safely. Techniques like hot/cold water shock methods are explained. Participants sand the edges until smooth.</p> <p>4 - Decoration (40 mins): groups test creative finishes—painting, glass etching, rope-wrapping, engraving, adhesive decals.</p>

	<p>5 - Reflection (20 mins): teams present their prototypes, sharing what worked well, challenges, and sustainability benefits. They note improvements for future workshops.</p> <p>This process not only produces tangible prototypes but also cultivates teamwork and design-thinking skills.</p>
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Phase 3: Design and implementation of the workshop

- Use of safe, shared tools:

Safety training is emphasized before using any cutting or sanding tools. Before hands-on work, trainers demonstrate safe bottle-cutting methods using bottle cutters and protective gear. Key instructions:

- Always wear gloves, goggles, and aprons.
- Use glass cutters slowly with even pressure.
- Apply water cooling to avoid cracks during hot/cold cutting.
- Work in pairs: one cuts, the other observes for safety.
- Trainers demonstrate safe disposal of shards into marked containers.
- Emergency protocols are explained.

Shared tools include: bottle cutters, sanding paper/blocks, etching kits, drills for lamps, and adhesive stations. Each workstation is supervised by a facilitator. Posters with safety icons are placed visibly. Safety is treated as a core learning objective.

- Hands-on creation of upcycled items:

In the main creative session, participants transform bottles into functional or decorative items. Options include:

- Drinking glasses (cut bottles, polish rims).
- Candle holders (cut mid-section, decorated with paint or rope).
- Vases or plant holders (retain full bottle neck, polish base).
- Decorative lamps (insert LED string lights, drill holes for artistic effects).
- Hanging planters (use ropes and knots to suspend halved bottles).

Participants are encouraged to produce at least two finished items. Trainers circulate, helping with technical challenges and suggesting artistic variations. Decorating materials such as glass paint, rope, and recycled wood bases are available. The final items are both functional and beautiful, ready for exhibition.

Phase 4: Documenting and sharing

- Photographic and video documentation of activities and products:

A rotating 'media team' of 2–3 participants document the process. Using smartphones and tripods, they capture:

- Step-by-step cutting, sanding, and decorating.

- Short interviews with participants sharing reflections.
- Before/after product shots in a dedicated lighted corner.

The team later compiles content into a recap slideshow or video. This not only creates visibility but also teaches digital storytelling skills.

- **Exhibitions, fairs, or showcases to display finished upcycled products:**

A "Reimagine Glass Festival" at a local makerspace or public park can be organised to promote the implemented activities. Create themed displays (e.g., "Illuminated Ideas" for lamps, "Green Guardians" for planters) with product tags detailing the original bottle source and environmental impact saved. A live demonstration area can be included, where workshop participants guide visitors through safe sanding or decorating techniques on pre-cut bottles. As a conclusion, they can organise a silent auction or "adoption" program for the pieces, with proceeds funding future community workshops.

- **Online platforms or social media to promote awareness and outcomes:**

Social media can be used to give visibility to the upcycling activities, such as multi-week "Glass Revival" social media series. On Instagram and Facebook, the participants can post daily "Before & After" carousels, 30-second "Maker Spotlight" videos featuring participant stories, and "Eco-Tip Tuesday" facts about glass upcycling. Instagram Stories polls and quizzes can also be used to engage followers. Additionally, the participants can create a TikTok challenge showcasing creative uses for upcycled glass and can finally compile all content into a highlight reel for the project's webpage, tagging partners and using a dedicated hashtag (#CommunityGlassRevival) to track reach and community engagement.

Phase 5: Resources and Tools

Physical resources	Technical tools	Human resources	Supporting documents
<p>Bottles from bars, restaurants, and households.</p> <p>Cutting jigs, scoring tools, sandpaper, drills, rope, paints, adhesives.</p> <p>Safety gear (gloves, goggles, aprons)</p> <p>Decorative additions: LED lights, recycled wood bases, etching kits.</p>	<p>Hand tools (bottle cutters, drills, sanding blocks).</p> <p>Power tools (rotary sanders, glass etching machines where available).</p> <p>Creative tools (paint, rope, adhesives).</p> <p>Documentation tools (cameras, phones, tripods, lighting).</p>	<p>Trainers skilled in glass cutting and upcycling.</p> <p>Volunteers and artisans (local makers, eco-artists).</p> <p>Safety supervisors.</p> <p>Facilitators to coordinate activities.</p>	<p>Step-by-step Donated guides on glass cutting and decorating.</p> <p>Posters on safety and sustainability facts.</p> <p>Case studies of successful glass upcycling projects.</p> <p>Templates for workshop agendas, feedback forms, and reflection sheets.</p>

To go further:

[Over 29 Awesome and Easy Bottle and Jar Crafts - Seasonal ideas including painted Halloween decor, spring bunnies, and gift-wrapped jars for holidays—perfect for reusing kitchen glass](#)

[Creative Upcycling Ideas for Glass Waste - Includes DIY projects like bottle lamps, vases, and furniture from old glass items](#)

[The Recycle Guide: Properties of Glass and Recycling Facts](#)

[Beginner's Guide to Bottle Cutting for Upcycling - Step-by-step on using tools to create glasses, vases, and candle holders safely.](#)

[Upcycling Bottles into Useful Home Items – A practical guide showcasing how empty bottles can be transformed into piggy banks, vases, lanterns, wind chimes, and more—great for demonstrating how everyday objects can become useful decor items.](#)

Electronics

Phase 1: Workshop preparation and collection of materials

- **Workshop details:**

Duration: 3 hours

Location: Community centre with tables, chairs, etc. Access to electricity/power outlets is also needed.

Participants: 10–15 adults

The session should begin with an icebreaker where each participant shares one small electronic item they have at home that no longer works or is unused. This will help to build rapport and introduce the theme of re-imagining discarded electronics as creative materials.

- **Mapping of locally available waste materials:**

Guide participants to work together in small groups to create a visual mind map of potential local sources of discarded electronics. To deliver this activity:

- Provide large sheets of paper or a whiteboard and encourage learners to think of a wide range of sources, such as recycling centres, repair cafés, schools upgrading their IT equipment, local businesses replacing office electronics and household donation drives.
- As the facilitator, prompt them with questions about where unused electronics might be found locally, or who might be replacing electronic items with new ones locally, for example, a local shop or café under renovation, etc.
- Summarise the findings at the end and create one master list to display in the workshop space.

- **Community engagement campaigns to encourage donations of reusable materials:**

Work with participants to design a simple local collection drive. To deliver this activity:

Identify community spaces such as schools, libraries and sports clubs.

Create clear, positive messages for posters, flyers and social media.

Encourage participants to share photos or short videos to explain the project and motivate donations.

- **Partnerships with organisations, municipalities or NGOs for material sourcing:**

Support participants to list local recycling depots, repair shops, NGOs and waste management offices. To deliver this activity, you can:

- Assign small groups to contact them with a short, prepared script explaining the project.
- Role-play conversations to build confidence before making real calls or visits.

Phase 2: Introduction and design of the products

- **Introductory workshops on upcycling and sustainability:**

Begin with a warm-up discussion to explore participants' existing knowledge about upcycling and sustainability.

Once the initial discussion has concluded, you can continue by showing a variety of discarded electronics collected for the workshop and ask participants to share where they think these items usually end up. Here you should highlight how electronics are often thrown away even when many parts can still be reused.

Then you can guide the group to reflect on the environmental and social benefits of upcycling, such as reducing landfill waste and supporting local creativity. Here you can also invite participants to share personal stories of items they have repaired or reused.

Conclude by connecting their ideas to the goals of the workshop and outlining the process they will follow to design and create their own upcycled products.

- **Creative brainstorming sessions to generate upcycling ideas:**

Organise participants into small groups and explain that the aim is to generate as many creative ideas as possible for reusing parts from old electronics.

Provide paper, coloured markers, and sticky notes to help visualise ideas.

Begin with five minutes of silent idea generation where participants write or draw individual concepts.

Afterward, groups spend 15 minutes sharing and combining these ideas into possible products.

Encourage both functional and artistic concepts, for example turning circuit boards into wall art, using old wires to create sculptures or converting broken computer fans into decorative items.

Each group selects their top three ideas to present to the whole group.

Record all suggestions on a shared board or digital space to create a collective resource.

Allow 5 minutes for feedback and reflections on the most promising concepts before moving forward to the design stage.

- **Co-design activities:**

Guide participants through a hands-on session where they explore, sort, evaluate

and design using collected electronics.

Begin by introducing safe handling practices, showing how to check items for sharp edges, hazardous materials or hidden batteries.

Demonstrate how to identify reusable parts such as circuit boards, buttons, wiring, fans and casings, explaining how each could be incorporated into creative or functional products.

Provide clear examples of how components can be used, such as turning circuit boards into jewellery or artwork, transforming old cables into baskets or repurposing casings for storage or decoration.

Instruct participants to carefully sort items into three groups:

- Safe and ready to use
- Needs repair
- Non-usable for recycling.

Encourage open discussion about why certain items fall into each category and the environmental impact of different disposal options.

Next, to advance the process, you should introduce sketching and brainstorming techniques to help participants plan their upcycling projects.

Explain how to create rough sketches that show the design from different angles and how to note required parts and materials.

Encourage participants to think critically about how their creations balance appearance, functionality, and environmental benefit.

Groups should then create multiple quick sketches, discuss ideas and compare possibilities before selecting one concept to develop further.

Support them to combine ideas where possible and highlight creative thinking.

Once a concept is chosen, guide participants through building simple prototypes using basic materials such as cardboard, tape, clay and safe electronic parts.

Throughout the session, emphasise teamwork and constructive feedback.

- Encourage groups to test their prototypes, identify problems, and make changes as needed.
- Walk around to observe progress, answer questions, and ensure safety practices are followed.

Conclude with a group discussion where each team reflects on challenges faced, solutions found and decisions made about which prototypes have the most potential for further development in the next phase.

Objective of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safely identify and prepare reusable electronic parts - Develop and evaluate creative, practical design concepts - Build collaboration and problem-solving skills within groups
Materials required:	Collected electronics, safety gear, paper, markers, tape, cardboard, clay, hand tools and recycling containers
Step by	1 – Sorting and safety:

step:	<p>Begin with a clear demonstration of safe handling procedures, explaining how to check electronics for sharp edges, hazardous components or hidden batteries. Show participants how to separate items into three groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safe and usable ● Needs repair ● Non-usable for recycling. <p>Encourage discussion on the potential of each item and how discarded parts can be reused or disposed of responsibly.</p> <p>2 – Component identification: Guide participants through identifying common electronic parts such as circuit boards, wires, buttons, fans, and casings. Explain their typical uses and discuss ideas for creative reuse. Allow participants to handle parts safely while you highlight examples of which components are most suitable for functional projects versus decorative ones.</p> <p>3 – Exploring inspiration: Show images or physical examples of upcycled electronics to encourage creativity. Discuss how form and function can be combined, for instance using circuit boards for artwork or turning old cables into practical household items. Encourage participants to think about community needs and how their designs could have a positive local impact.</p> <p>4 – Sketching ideas: Ask participants to sketch a number of concepts individually, using paper and markers. After sharing their sketches within their group, participants choose two or three strong ideas to develop further. Remind them to consider aesthetic appeal, usefulness and environmental value while designing.</p> <p>5 – Prototype planning: Before building, groups should plan the steps needed to assemble their product. They list required parts, additional materials and basic tools. This preparation stage helps them to work efficiently and safely during construction.</p> <p>6 – Prototype creation: Groups create rough models using safe electronic parts, cardboard, tape and other basic materials. You should emphasise rapid experimentation rather than perfection in this step as groups will slow their progress if they try to find perfection. Remind them it is only a prototype. Check regularly that safety rules are followed and encourage participants to try different approaches if challenges arise.</p> <p>7 – Presentation and reflection: Groups present their prototypes to the larger group, explaining their design choices, challenges faced, and how the product could</p>
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	be improved. After all presentations, you should facilitate a closing discussion on scaling ideas for broader use and reflect on what was learned during the process.
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Phase 3: Design and implementation of the workshop

- Use of safe, shared tools:

Begin by introducing the range of tools participants will use during the session, including basic hand tools such as pliers, screwdrivers and wire cutters, as well as shared equipment like drills, hot glue guns and soldering irons if available.

Demonstrate each tool slowly and clearly, showing its function, correct grip, and the proper way to handle and store it when not in use.

Stress the importance of wearing safety gear such as gloves, goggles, and aprons to prevent injury.

Then divide participants into small groups and allow them to practice using tools on non-essential materials before they begin working on their projects. This practice session helps build confidence and ensures everyone understands the safe operation of each tool. Remind participants to maintain a clean, organised workspace and to keep tools in designated areas when finished to prevent accidents.

Encourage collaboration by assigning a “safety monitor” within each group who checks that safety rules are followed and helps manage tool sharing.

- Throughout the activity, move between groups to observe technique, offer feedback and reinforce safe practices.
- Use visual prompts such as posters or laminated instruction cards placed near workstations as constant reminders.
- Close the safety session by reviewing key points together and addressing any questions before moving on to hands-on creation.

- Hands-on creation of upcycled items:

Once participants are confident using the tools, guide them into the creative stage of upcycling electronics. Begin by revisiting the designs and prototypes developed earlier, encouraging each group to refine their chosen concept.

- Provide a range of examples to inspire creativity, such as turning computer keyboards into wall art, using circuit boards to create unique jewellery, repurposing fans and cables into small desk organisers, or transforming broken speakers into planters or lamps.
- Encourage participants to think beyond function and explore artistic expression. For example, old smartphone cases can become decorative frames, while disconnected wires can be shaped into abstract sculptures or woven into baskets.
- Remind participants that the goal is to combine practical reuse with imaginative design, making each creation both useful and meaningful.

As groups begin constructing their final pieces, circulate to offer guidance and problem-solving support.

- Emphasise quality and attention to detail while maintaining a relaxed, collaborative environment.
- Allow time for testing and adjusting the items, encouraging participants to share challenges and solutions with one another.

Conclude with a short gallery walk where participants display their creations, celebrate each other's efforts, and discuss potential ways these products could be sold, donated, or displayed to raise awareness about electronic waste and creative sustainability.

Phase 4: Documenting and sharing

- **Photographic and video documentation of activities and products:**
 - Ask participants to document the process of transformation, from discarded electronics to finished items, using phones or cameras.
 - Capture close-ups of components, hands-on work and final creations.
 - Rotate roles so everyone contributes to creating a visual story of the workshop.
- **Exhibitions, fairs, or showcases to display finished upcycled products:**
 - Host a “Tech to Treasure” exhibition at the community centre or local library.
 - Display items alongside before-and-after photos showing their journey
 - Include short descriptions of materials used and the story behind each
 - Invite families, local businesses and environmental groups to attend.
- **Online platforms or social media to promote awareness and outcomes.**
 - Launch a social media challenge encouraging others to share their own upcycling ideas.
 - Post transformation reels showing old electronics becoming new products.
 - Feature participant interviews and step-by-step photo guides.
 - Use a unique hashtag, like #ReimagineTech, to link posts and build visibility.

Phase 5: Resources and Tools

Physical resources	Technical tools	Human resources	Supporting documents
Accessible, safe, and inclusive	Hand tools: screwdrivers, pliers,	Trainers experienced in	Step-by-step guides for

workshop space with tables, electrical outlets and good lighting	wire cutters, precision tools for dismantling electronics	electronics upcycling and safe handling of components	dismantling electronics safely
Donated or recovered electronics (phones, keyboards, speakers, cables, small appliances)	Shared power tools: drills, soldering irons, heat guns, glue guns (with strict safety oversight)	Volunteers or local repair café mentors to demonstrate techniques and provide guidance	Visual safety posters for tool use and electronics handling
Containers for sorting parts into safe/usable, repairable, and non-usable for recycling	Creative tools: adhesives, paints, stencils, markers, clay, and basic design software (optional)	Group facilitators to coordinate activities, supervise safety, and support learning	Templates for product sketching, prototyping, and design planning
Safety gear: gloves, goggles, masks, aprons	Documentation equipment: smartphones, cameras, tripods for capturing images and videos	Community coordinators to liaise with donors, partners, and showcase venues	Case studies of successful electronics upcycling projects and creative reuse ideas
Organised storage shelves or bins for sorted components and finished projects	Power strips and extension cords to support multiple stations safely	Accessibility support staff to assist participants with specific needs	Checklists for material collection, sorting, and tracking donations

To go further:

[Restart Project – Community Repair and Upcycling](#) A hub for learning how to repair and repurpose electronics, with guides, tips, and community repair event information.

[iFixit – Repair Guides and Tutorials](#). Detailed, free step-by-step guides for safely dismantling and repairing a wide range of electronics, including phones, computers, and household gadgets.

[WEEE Forum – Circular Electronics Resources](#) Information on proper handling of electronic waste, recycling initiatives, and innovative reuse practices across Europe.

[YouTube Video – DIY Electronics Upcycling](#). This video encourages people not to throw away their broken tech, but rather to turn it into art.

Evaluation, valorisation and follow-up

1. Evaluation criteria to be established before the beginning of the workshop.

Knowledge	Skills	Environmental awareness	Creativity & innovation
Do participants now understand upcycling principles, waste sorting, and material-specific techniques?	Can they safely handle tools, select appropriate materials, and produce functional/creative items?	Are they more aware of waste reduction and sustainable practices?	Did they apply original ideas in their designs?

2. Observation during the workshops (note participant engagement, teamwork, problem-solving, and safe tool usage, assess quality and functionality of the final upcycled products).
3. Participants feedback (distribute a short survey with both quantitative questions (ratings from 1-5) and qualitative questions (open comments)).
4. Environmental Impact (quantity of waste diverted from landfill (weight or volume of materials used), number of items produced vs. materials available, reusability or longevity of created items).

Conclusion

The UPNOWASTE workshops outlined in these guidelines aim to empower and reinforce the perception of all participants to creatively recycle a wide variety of materials, including metals, wood, plastics, paper, textiles, glass and electronics. The focus is to foster environmental awareness, to promote hands-on learning and to encourage community engagement through collaborative activities which transform waste into useful and artistic objects.

Each workshop follows five phases, starting with preparing and collecting materials, designing products, implementing creative sessions, documenting and sharing resources and evaluating results. Overall, the workshops prepare both individual and collective responsibility towards sustainability, innovative recycling practices and provide a framework to support lifelong learning and active participation in environmental initiatives.

These workshops have a strong replicability potential as they can be adapted to different target groups and to different purposes. Educators can follow the indications provided in the phases, while enriching activities with new elements and tailoring objectives to their target audience. For example, upcycling workshops can serve as a tool for social inclusion and integration, enhancing competences among marginalised groups, or to improving participants' soft skills.

A practical application could be organising upcycling workshops for migrant women interested in developing small businesses based on recycled and/or upcycled crafts. Such activities promote the transmission of unique knowledge and foster economic autonomy.

Finally, a key dimension of UPNOWASTE is the dissemination and promotion of workshops outcomes. Exhibitions, public events, and social media campaigns not only raise awareness about sustainable practices but also empower participants by giving visibility to their creativity and resilience.

In conclusion, UPNOWASTE workshops represent a dynamic and adaptable model that connects environmental education, social inclusion, and empowerment. By combining creativity with sustainability, they inspire individuals and communities to take an active role in shaping a greener, fairer, and more inclusive future.

Annex

Photo and video release form

I, the undersigned, [**Participant's Name**] hereby grant permission to [**Organization Name**], to take photographs, video recordings, and/or audio recordings of me during the UPNOWASTE workshops and events.

I authorize [**Organization Name**] to use, reproduce, and/or publish these materials in print, digital, and/or electronic formats for purposes including but not limited to:

- Promotional materials (brochures, flyers, etc.)
- Social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)
- Websites
- Press releases
- Educational or training materials

I understand that:

- My participation is voluntary.
- I will not receive compensation for the use of my image, voice, or likeness.
- These materials may be used without geographic or time limitation.

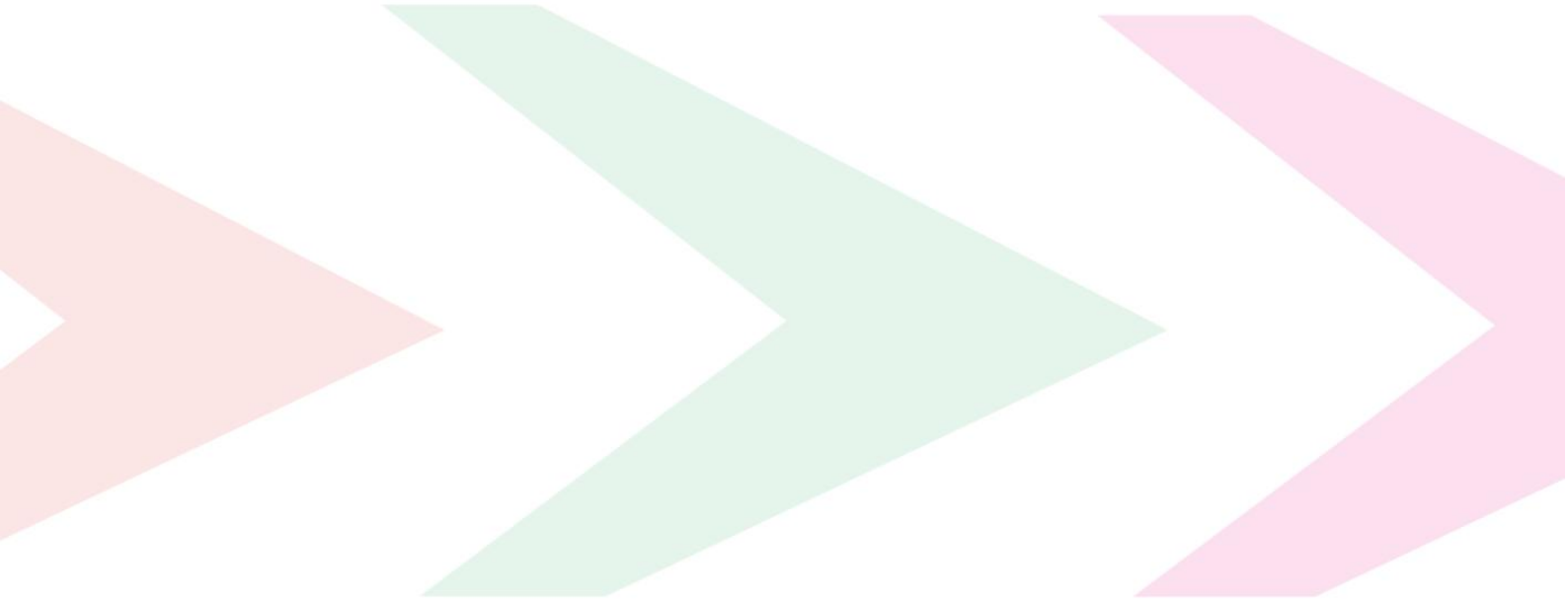
Signature:

Date:



UPNOWASTE

UPcycling: New life for Old
items to reduce WASTE



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