



Putting second-hand first to create local



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Introduction

Encouraging the communities for waste reduction, reuse, and recycling is the utmost target of almost every waste management group these days. The most effective way of reducing waste is to avoid producing it; however, when it is not possible, reusing and recycling waste is the best way to tackle this problem (Fig 1). European countries are implementing several policies emphasizing the re-use of waste generated by local communities. To provide support to local municipalities for the design of effective re-use strategies short briefing was created by the Zero Waste Cities program by Zero Waste Europe and RREUSE.

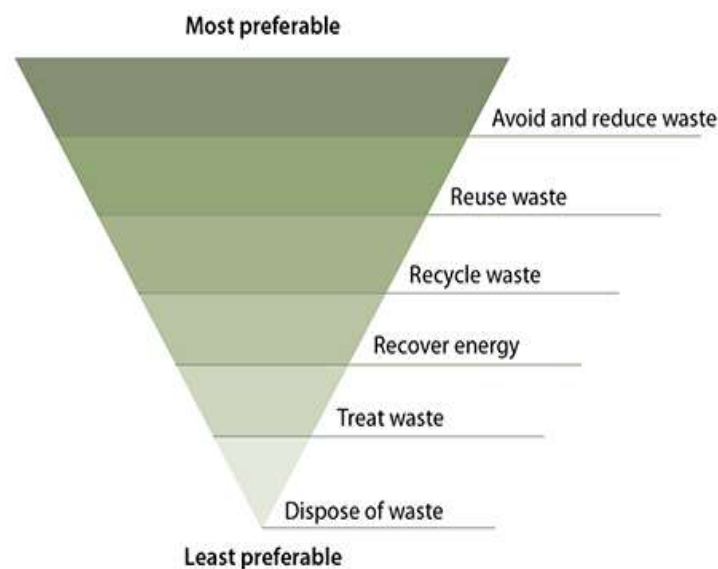


Fig 1. Waste hierarchy

Local reuse strategies

Local reuse strategies refer to the policies implemented by municipalities that aim to expand the volume of materials that are reused or repaired so that they can again be used for the same purpose for which they were designed.

Municipalities responsible for collecting waste across Europe have noticed that a vast amount of waste material arriving at waste collection center have reuse value or can be repaired. Example of such waste includes electric and electronic equipment (WEEE), used furniture, and used leisure goods. Products of these kinds can be reused and repaired but the problem is that cities

and communities are often unsupported for carrying out this initiative which is why Zero Waste Cities programme by Zero Waste Europe and RREUSE suggested the municipalities adopt reuse strategies for the understanding of the local economic, social and legal environment.

Benefits of re-use

Re-use strategies not only provide benefits to the environment but also provide lots of social benefits to the communities as it creates local employment options. In addition to decreasing the amount of waste generated, it can strengthen the local economy as the money will be reinvested within the same region.

It was reported by RREUSE that social enterprises in the re-use sector create on average 70 jobs per 1,000 tonnes of products collected.

Key policies to encourage re-use strategies at the city and the community level

RREUSE and Zero Waste Europe have outlined several key policies including examples from Europe of where these policies are successfully used. Following are the key policies covered by them:

1. Adopting environmental and social public procurement criteria that prioritize re-using

Public money efficiently should be the main focus of municipalities by keeping an example of Europe. EU's Waste Framework Directive stated that procurement is a base for municipalities to promote the utilization of reusable products and support re-use activities.

Several examples have been included by Zero Waste Europe and RREUSE, such as including the organizations that keep a check on the re-use of decommissioned equipment rather than being sent for disposal. Not only these but the reuse and repair of wastes also employ the disadvantaged and disabled people which directly benefit the communities.

There are several examples of municipalities that are employing these criteria such as the municipality of Vicenza, Italy, textiles collection in the city of Antwerp (Belgium), and the CRNS REUSE consortium, UK (Scotland).

2. Establishing re-use and prevention targets

Municipalities need to establish a specific target for the volume of material to be reused, as this helps in defining the framework within which all other reuse policies will work. In 2019, a study conducted by the Wuppertal Institute on Zero Waste Europe about the waste prevention identified nine product groups to be prioritized within waste prevention policies including food and beverages; large household appliances; small household appliances; IT and

telecommunications equipment; toys, leisure, and sports equipment; electrical and electronic tools; textiles; motor vehicles; furniture and furnishing.

It was emphasized that local targets should prioritize the locally prevalent waste streams. For this to achieve, municipalities should work in collaboration with those companies and businesses that commit to working towards the reuse of the material collected by municipalities. This not only helps in the collection of re-use waste but can provide employment and training opportunities in the reuse and repair sector.

One of the very good examples of this is the region of Flanders (Belgium) which has a re-use target of 7kg of material per capita per year by 2022.

3. Investing in and creating quality collection points

For the reuse strategy to be successful, it is required that the products to be reused can be easily drop-off by the locals from where the re-use operators can collect them. These drop-off points are operated by municipalities in partnership with the local waste management company. Thus, municipalities are required to provide financial and logistical support to these collection points to make the reuse strategy a success. These collection points should be maintained in a way that the products kept there will not be damaged by rain or any other external factor. For this, staff working with reused materials needs to be adequately skilled so that they will be able to separate the reused material into categories that safeguard their reusability. Municipalities should encourage the citizen and businesses to deposit their items directly at the re-use shops so that they can have an idea of what will happen to the product they deposit for reuse.

One such strategy is offered by Munich, Germany, where the city of Munich offers several options to its citizens to donate reusable items. Of these options, one is the second-hand store named 'Spearheaded by the Halle 2' which acts as an educational hub for reuse, the city also provides several other options for reuse products that can be easily accessible online.

4. Creating a re-use culture locally

Re-use is required to be a natural choice instead of buying something new. For this to happen, reuse organizations should keep on circulating the reused items to market until they can be used. A re-use culture can be created by educating the locals and businesses about the importance of re-use and the reason for opting to reuse products from markets. Further individuals can be explained what can be reused and what are the drop-off points for reuse materials. Promoting the zero waste events and policies by municipalities helps in raising awareness about reuse.

One such example is offered by the Province of Barcelona, SPAIN, where the repair truck is run by the social enterprise Solidança Treball which allows citizens to learn how to fix and modify their waste products that are capable of reusing.

Conclusion

Waste management is one of the most important aspects of working for the welfare of our environment. The initiative was taken by Europe in collaboration with the local municipalities, REUSE, and Zero waste cities Europe is a wonderful example of re-using and rebuilding products that still have some sort of economic value. This initiative not only provides strategies for reducing waste and supporting reuse but also provides employment options for the people. This briefing will inspire the other municipalities in opting for these strategies for the well-being of people, the nation, and our environment.

References

1. Putting second-hand first to create local jobs.

file:///C:/Users/Admin/Desktop/HOPE/zwe_reuse_guide_putting-second-hand-first-to-create-local-jobs_en.pdf

2. The Waste hierarchy. <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/recycling-and-reuse/warr-strategy/the-waste-hierarchy>