

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES' ROLE IN FURNITURE & MATTRESS CIRCULARITY



RREUSE is Europe’s largest network of social enterprises active in the circular economy. We focus on reuse, repair and, to a lesser extent, recycling. Our mission is to empower, represent, and support the social and circular enterprise community. We help drive its development through effecting positive change in European policy, facilitating the exchange of best practices, and fostering meaningful partnerships. Social enterprises in our network annually collect over 1.3 million tonnes of discarded goods and prioritise their local reuse. They provide jobs, skills and training opportunities to over 120,000 individuals, the majority of whom are at risk of social exclusion and face barriers in the mainstream labour market. On average, RREUSE members create 70 inclusive, local jobs per 1,000 tonnes of goods they collect with the intention of giving them a second life through reuse.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RREUSE would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their time and expertise that were essential for this report:

Martin Ward and Keith McDonagh (Bounce Back Recycling), Marin Zver (Center Ponovne Uporabe), Claire O’Mahony and Steve Flint (Deaf Enterprises), Raphael Guillot (Envie 2E Lorraine), Ingrid Plana and Paula Veciana (Formació i Treball), Jenny Williams, Niall McConkey and Rebecca Forgan (Habitat for Humanity Ireland), Elles Kempers (Het Goed), Francesca Battaglia, Marianna Gumiero and Marina Fornasier (Insieme Cooperativa Sociale), Anu Rissanen and Tuomas Korkiakangas (Kierrätyskeskus), Matthias Neitsch and Peter Wagner (Re-Use Austria), Dana Kalistová and Zuzana Kuberová (Reuse Federace), Jean-Michel Verlinden (Oxfam België/Belgique), Mark Morgan (Stella’s Voice), and Anne Caillebotte (Stúdio Emmaüs).

DISCLAIMERS

We have made efforts to ensure complete factual accuracy of the report. Should any unintended mistakes be found by the readers, please kindly bring them to our attention via info@rreuse.org



This report is co-funded by IKEA Social Entrepreneurship B.V.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



- Furniture and mattresses are among the most logistically complex and under-optimised waste streams in Europe. Each year, around 10.5 million tonnes of furniture are consumed in the EU, yet only around 10% is recycled, with reuse and remanufacturing accounting for a minimal share. The majority is landfilled or incinerated. Similarly, up to 30 million mattresses are discarded annually, despite the fact that nearly 85% of their material content is technically recyclable. This represents a significant loss of valuable materials and contributes to avoidable greenhouse gas emissions.

- At the same time, furniture poverty remains a pressing social issue. With 21% of the EU population at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and 27.5 million people experiencing severe material and social deprivation, access to affordable household goods is vital.



- Social enterprises have long been pioneers of practical circular economy models in furniture and mattress reuse, repair and recycling. Driven by their mission of social inclusion, local job creation and community service, they extend product lifespans, divert bulky waste from disposal and create meaningful employment and training pathways for people facing barriers to the labour market. In doing so, they contribute not only to environmental sustainability but also to a just transition towards a low-carbon circular economy.

- As Europe's largest network of social enterprises active in the circular economy, RREUSE has mapped about 1,500 locations where members are keeping furniture in use, and nearly 100 working with mattresses. In 2024 alone, social enterprises in the RREUSE network separately collected 166,000 tonnes of furniture, of which 84,000 tonnes were reused locally.



- The 14 case studies in this report highlight that social enterprises are effective, locally embedded actors in furniture and mattress value chains. However, they face persistent barriers, including limited physical space, inadequate funding, skill and capacity gaps, low quality of donated products, and B2B partnership as well as public procurement challenges. This results in social enterprises operating below their potential or in some instances, discontinuing their activities altogether.

- Despite these challenges, the research also highlights conditions that enable resilience and growth: strong social and circular mission, skills development, diverse collaborations, enabling regulatory frameworks, investment in internal operations, and lean and flexible operational models.



- The findings demonstrate significant untapped potential to expand and replicate successful models across Europe. In this context, tailored capacity-building and pilot initiatives can enable organisations to bolster their business models as well as experiment with and refine innovative approaches to improving recovery rates and extending product lifecycles within a relatively low-risk environment. By strengthening capabilities and fostering learning, these efforts can enhance existing circular initiatives and accelerate their effective scaling for broader, long-term impact.

- The case studies also demonstrate that partnerships are central to organisational resilience and scalability. At the same time, mainstreaming reuse, repair and second-hand consumption across consumer behaviour, corporate practices, and public procurement is essential to achieving systemic change.



1. INTRODUCTION

Social enterprises have historically played a pivotal role in the circular economy. Collecting, sorting, repurposing and making products and materials available in second-hand shops has long been a service they provide while also creating meaningful employment opportunities and offering up- and re-skilling for individuals who face barriers in the labour market. Bulky waste streams, particularly furniture and mattresses, form a core part of these activities.

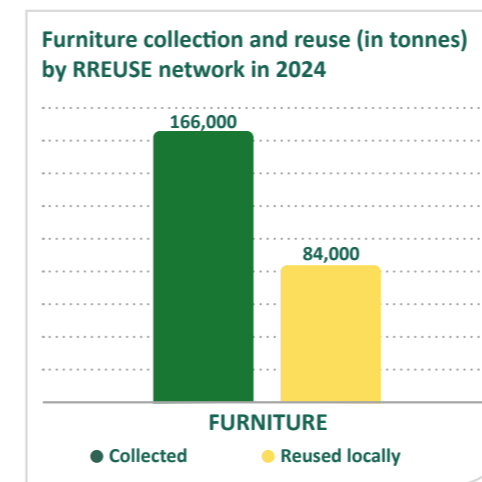
Table 1. Furniture and mattress locations in the RREUSE network¹

| Country | Furniture & Mattress Locations | Furniture Locations | Mattress Locations |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Armenia | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Austria | 181 | 99 | 82 |
| Belgium | 206 | 205 | 1 |
| Croatia | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Czech Republic | 49 | 49 | 0 |
| Denmark | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Estonia | 17 | 17 | 0 |
| Finland | 17 | 16 | 1 |
| France | 331 | 330 | 1 |
| Georgia | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Germany | 54 | 51 | 3 |
| Greece | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hungary | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ireland | 15 | 14 | 1 |
| Italy | 39 | 38 | 1 |
| Latvia | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Luxembourg | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Netherlands | 267 | 267 | 0 |
| North Macedonia | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Poland | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Portugal | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Romania | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Slovakia | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Slovenia | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| Spain | 56 | 56 | 0 |
| Sweden | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Switzerland | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| Ukraine | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| United Kingdom | 185 | 182 | 3 |
| USA | 42 | 42 | 0 |

Within the RREUSE network, we have identified 1,501 locations where social economy actors are keeping furniture in use, with 97 extending their work to mattresses. These locations span 24 countries and include a range of entities, from local organisations to national networks. A single social enterprise may operate across multiple sites, such as warehouses, reuse centres and retail outlets, highlighting the operational complexity required in managing bulky waste.

As shown in Table 1, these locations are not geographically distributed evenly. A proportionally large number of locations are found in a small number of countries with well-established reuse systems for bulky waste, including France, the Netherlands, Belgium, the UK and Austria. In contrast, many countries where the RREUSE network is present have only a handful of locations, or none at all. Our mapping also shows that mattress-related circular activities are far less widespread than social enterprises' work with furniture.

In 2024 alone, social enterprises in the RREUSE network separately collected 166,000 tonnes of furniture. By weight, this represents about 13% of collected waste.



Managing discarded furniture and mattresses is particularly complex and costly. Their bulky and heavy frames, varied material composition, and other factors, lead to a glaring gap in these products' value chains once consumers decide to replace them.

According to the latest available data, around 10.5 million tonnes of furniture are consumed in the EU every year but only 10% of this is recycled, alongside a minimal share of reuse and remanufacturing activities within charities, social enterprises, second-hand shops or online exchange platforms.² The remaining 80-90% of discarded furniture end up in landfills or incineration facilities.³ Mattresses also pose a particular challenge due to their flexible structure and heterogeneous material composition, which makes disassembly and recovery difficult. Although up to 30 million mattresses are discarded annually in the EU and almost 85% of a mattress's mass

can technically be recycled, nearly all of them are either landfilled or incinerated.⁴ This is a clear missed opportunity and leads to substantial material loss. It also contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, notably methane, which has a much higher, more immediate, global warming potential than CO₂.

From a social perspective, furniture poverty remains a pressing issue in the EU. Of the EU population, 21% remains at risk of poverty or social exclusion,⁵ with 6.4% (or 27.5 million people) experiencing severe material and social deprivation.⁶ The situation has been worsening through the cost-of-living crisis. Social enterprises have a crucial role to play in this context.

Frequently working in partnership with various stakeholders, including local authorities, waste companies as well as retail businesses, social enterprises are central to the recovery and redistribution of bulky waste. While the activities' scope and scale vary across different geographies due to factors such as their diverse market conditions, policy frameworks and available partnerships, their efforts commonly generate significant environmental impact by diverting materials from landfill. They also generate major positive socio-economic impacts by providing inclusive employment and by ensuring that these items remain accessible to the wider community at affordable prices, or even redistributing these items directly to people experiencing furniture poverty or otherwise in vulnerable situations. Yet, recognising the diversity of contexts is important to fully appreciate the impact of these organisations and their challenges.

This report is but one small part of a longer-term effort to create a more cohesive and impactful ecosystem where social enterprises are key actors in furniture and mattress value chains. Building upon RREUSE's 25 years of experience in connecting, representing and strengthening the sector, this effort encompasses research, stakeholder consultation and coordination, best practice exchange, facilitating partnerships, capacity-building initiatives and policy engagement.

Given their operating model, strengthening social enterprises' role in reuse, repair and recycling of furniture and mattresses can both increase the circularity of furniture and mattresses and enhance social inclusion.

2. EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES' WORK WITH FURNITURE & MATTRESSES

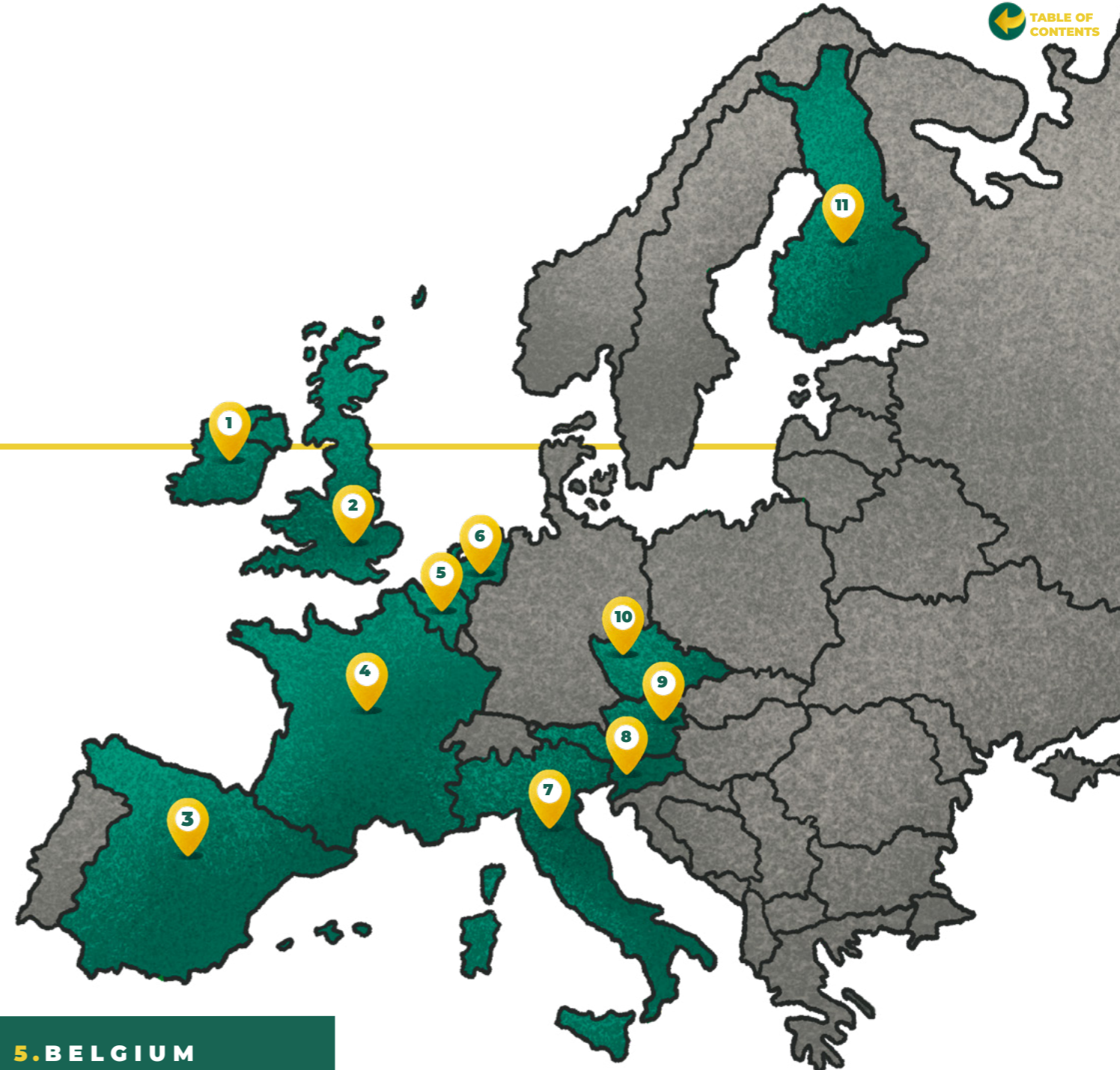
This report was prepared within the scope of the **Social Enterprises' Role in Furniture and Mattress Circularity** project that aimed to map RREUSE members' existing activities in furniture and mattress circularity and facilitate knowledge sharing and partnerships within our network as well as strengthen foundations for future partnerships in the social economy and beyond.

The report draws on a research approach combining network consultation, desk research, surveys and semi-structured interviews with representatives of social enterprises or social enterprise networks.

Following a comprehensive mapping of furniture and mattress circular activities across the geographic reach of the RREUSE network, we identified 14 case studies in 11 countries that demonstrate the diversity of organisational forms, target groups, business models and partnerships across different national contexts. While we aimed for a broad geographical coverage, we prioritised a broad scope of circular activities which led to include three examples from Ireland. This is due to a combination of unique activities (such as kitchen rescue) and specific target groups (the Travellers and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community).

As the examples illustrate, business models through which social enterprises operate within furniture and mattress value chains include: reuse and resale (e.g. second-hand shops, e-commerce platforms), repair and refurbishment activities, upcycling initiatives, specialised mattress cleaning and recycling services as well as network-based models such as federations of furniture banks and reuse centres. Several case studies also highlight collaborative models, including partnerships with public authorities, private companies and participation in Extended Producer Responsibility schemes.

While each case study reflects specific local conditions, several cross-cutting insights emerge. Firstly, social enterprises are active across collection, sorting, repair, and redistribution. Secondly, they have been developing innovative approaches to complex waste streams. Lastly, they demonstrate how context, such as national policy frameworks, access to public procurement and partnerships with private actors, significantly shapes the type and scale of activities undertaken.



1. IRELAND

- ★ (and Northern Ireland) Removal and resale of entire kitchen sets to provide affordable home solutions
- ★ Furniture refurbishment with dedicated employment of people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing
- ★ Mattress recycling with dedicated employment of members of the Traveller community

2. UNITED KINGDOM

- ★ Innovative mattress cleaning to improve reuse rates and provide material aid in partnership with public authorities

3. SPAIN

- ★ Social furniture recovery workshop creating real homes for families at risk of social exclusion

4. FRANCE

- ★ Social enterprises partnering together to scale up furniture upcycling and access public contracts
- ★ Dismantling and recycling of mattresses, with participation in the national EPR scheme

5. BELGIUM

- ★ Upcycling and resale of furniture from public authorities and companies through B2B partnerships

6. NETHERLANDS

- ★ Second-hand shops selling furniture and mattresses through reuse and preparation for reuse

7. ITALY

- ★ Social enterprise established through a grassroots movement, to recover and resell items including furniture and mattresses

8. SLOVENIA

- ★ The first reuse centre in the country, integrating collection, preparation for reuse and resale

9. AUSTRIA

- ★ E-commerce established to sell second-hand items including furniture and mattresses

10. CZECH REPUBLIC

- ★ Federation of furniture banks and reuse centres established to tackle material poverty and reduce waste

11. FINLAND

- ★ Second-hand furniture was used to revamp a public library in collaboration with an architect company

2.1. KITCHEN RESCUE PROGRAMME



| | |
|---|--|
| Social enterprise or network | Habitat ReStore |
| Product stream | Furniture (kitchens) |
| Activity | Reuse, Repair & Refurbishment |
| Country | Ireland and UK (Northern Ireland) |
| Year started | 2014 |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household or individual donations Donations from mainstream businesses |
| Destination of product stream | Individual homes |
| Partnerships | Mainstream businesses |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenues from product and/or materials resale Public tax relief scheme: In Northern Ireland, UK, donors can opt to make their material donations eligible for a public tax relief scheme known as Gift Aid. Under this scheme, the social enterprise can claim an additional 25% of the sale value of the donated item from the government, increasing the financial value of donations and supporting the organisation's work. |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 21–50 ⁷ |

INTRODUCTION

Habitat ReStore is a social enterprise of Habitat for Humanity, an international charity fighting global poverty and homelessness. Habitat ReStore tackles poverty in Ireland and Northern Ireland by allowing families to access low-cost home improvement materials, providing training and employability support, and preventing waste.

The Irish market for new kitchens has been growing steadily by about 10% every year since 2000 and is estimated to represent about 188.9 million euros per annum in 2026.⁸ This trend reflects a steadily growing number of kitchen replacements year on year, resulting in a substantial volume of functional and good quality existing units at risk of disposal.

To address this, Habitat ReStore developed a novel reuse concept, giving rise to the Kitchen Rescue programme. Under this programme, entire kitchen units that are still in good condition are carefully deconstructed from homes during the installation of new kitchens, to enable their reuse and prevent disposal to landfill. These units are then resold at affordable prices at ReStore locations. This initiative was piloted in 2014 following the launch of the first Habitat ReStore in Europe in Lisburn, County Antrim. It has since grown and developed as an integral programme in all eight Habitat ReStore branches across Ireland and Northern Ireland today.



© Habitat for Humanity Ireland

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

The Kitchen Rescue programme provides a practical solution for reusing large, bulky kitchen units that are difficult to circulate. Habitat ReStore actively promotes the Kitchen Rescue programme to customers and homeowners to build awareness of the services they provide. Although donors contribute a small fee (€175) toward the costs of their kitchen sets' removal, this is comparable to the less desirable option of paying another service provider to dispose of them, which in many cases leads to the kitchen being sent to landfill. Kitchen donors often decide to support the social and environmental causes of Habitat ReStore with extra financial donations.

Apart from on-the-ground promotion to store customers, Habitat ReStore focuses on developing collaborations with kitchen retail companies to expand the reach of their programme and increase kitchen donations. Recently, ReStore established the first 'Kitchen Rescue' partnership with Kube Kitchens, which now promotes the option for their customers to repurpose their old kitchen sets in their stores throughout Ireland. According to a ReStore representative, such partnerships help ensure a high reuse rate of old kitchen sets and enable data collection regarding the availability of good quality kitchen sets across Ireland, allowing the team to plan kitchen removals more efficiently.

These collaborative efforts and outreach initiatives have also attracted broader media attention. The Kitchen Rescue programme was featured by RTÉ, Ireland's national television and radio broadcaster, in a series that highlighted inspiring examples in the circular economy. This promotion resulted in increased public awareness of the relevance of this work and led to a noticeable increase in kitchen donations. To date, the programme has rescued 250 kitchens.

In addition to raising awareness and securing donations, Kitchen Rescue provides an important form of community support by making quality home solutions accessible to people in need. They ensure that retrieved kitchens are in good condition while keeping prices substantially below those of new kitchens sold in retail stores, giving every household the chance to furnish their homes sustainably. On occasion, donated kitchens directly support Habitat for Humanity Ireland's House to Home programme, which aims to help people who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, homelessness by providing practical support to help make their house a home.



Kitchen Rescue gives donors an opportunity to divert from landfill and see their kitchen have a new life in a new home. It's a win-win for everyone.

- Habitat ReStore Supervisor



ANNA IS PROTECTING THE PLANET

Habitat ReStore’s Kitchen Rescue programme gives local people, like Anna, who are fitting a new kitchen an opportunity to ensure their old one doesn’t end up in landfill.

Anna said, “I was looking for somewhere to donate furniture when I learned about ReStore and the Kitchen Rescue programme. I was getting rid of my old kitchen, and just because I’m fed up with it doesn’t mean it should end up in a skip! It feels good to know it will be used again, finding a new home with someone in the community who needs it.”



Kitchen donor Anna and ReStore Drogheda Manager Andy standing in front of the Habitat ReStore van, which collects donations from customers and carries out Kitchen Rescue.

© Habitat for Humanity Ireland

Habitat ReStore provides training and upskilling opportunities for people who face barriers in the labour market, including the long-term unemployed or those with mental health challenges. Volunteers work alongside trained staff members, helping to build their confidence while gaining skills that support them in seeking long-term employment elsewhere.

Through the ReStore network, Habitat for Humanity Ireland also offers free, practical and accessible courses to these volunteers. The courses are accredited through the Open College Network Northern Ireland, a UK-recognised technical and professional awarding organisation.

According to a Habitat ReStore representative, 25 people secured employment through ReStore’s training, the majority of which never had a job previously. Some of them found employment in other sectors or in different work environments, such as a bakery or an office. This attests to the versatility of hard and soft skills they gained from the programme.

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Kitchen Rescue gives unwanted kitchen units a second life, meeting a clear market need while supporting Habitat for Humanity Ireland’s House to Home programme to furnish people in vulnerable situations. Strategic retailer partnerships and national media coverage have strengthened supply and public engagement. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including unmet demand in some regions, unsuitable donations, short-notice collection requests and workforce limitations. Despite this, the initiative demonstrates how targeted reuse can deliver both environmental and social impact.

CHALLENGES

| | |
|---|--|
| Unable to meet demand in certain regions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen Rescue receives but is unable to meet requests from other parts of Ireland and Northern Ireland not yet covered by their branches. |
| Unsuitability of kitchen sets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some donors overestimate the condition of their kitchens when they are in fact unsuitable for resale, resulting in Kitchen Rescue investing manpower and time in making on-site visits that are not compensated for. |
| Operational constraints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some donors contact Kitchen Rescue at short notice to remove their kitchen sets, thus, the team must respond quickly or risk not being able to recover them. |
| Skill gaps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen Rescue is unable to repurpose kitchen units that have gas cookers as the certification required is more stringent and currently lacking in the workforce. |

SUCCESS FACTORS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Meeting a market need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen Rescue’s innovative reuse model addresses a clear gap in the market by giving unwanted kitchen units a second life. • This approach not only diverts waste but also offers consumers a more sustainable alternative to disposing of their kitchen sets directly. |
| Strategic B2B collaborations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with retailers provide direct access to customers who are replacing their old kitchen sets, strengthening Kitchen Rescue’s supply of kitchen sets for recovery and reuse. |
| Strong media engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National media coverage has significantly boosted Kitchen Rescue’s visibility, increasing public awareness and driving higher levels of customer interest and engagement. |

2.2. STÜDIO EMMAÜS



| | |
|--|---|
| Social enterprise or network | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atelier Emmaüs, R Upcycling (Relais Val de Seine), • Les ReCréateurs (Emmaüs Défi), Atelier Regain (Frip Insertion Marseille), Les Surcyclés du Léopard (Relais Est), Les Inventives d’Emma (Tri d’Emma), Atelier Rare, Coup de main |
| Product stream | Furniture, Textiles |
| Activity | Upcycling |
| Country | France |
| Year started | 2019 |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household or individual donations • Imperfect stock from mainstream businesses |
| Destination of product stream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sold in shops • Used to furnish public spaces • Used to furnish business spaces |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprises • Mainstream businesses • Public authorities |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding from private organisations / private foundations |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 21–50 |

INTRODUCTION

Stúdio Emmaüs is a collective of upcycling projects across eight Emmaüs workshops, primarily focused on the upcycling of furniture and textiles. The workshops are part of the wider Emmaüs movement, a social solidarity organisation dedicated to supporting people in vulnerable situations through employment, shelter and activities in the circular economy, including the collection and sale of second-hand goods.

The idea behind Stúdio Emmaüs was to pool capacities and experience, to exchange ideas and knowledge as well as to embark on a larger variety of upcycling projects. Their collective mission is to give new life to abandoned objects and materials, while providing training and insertion opportunities to people who face barriers in the labour market, through sewing or woodworking.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

Stúdio Emmaüs strives for B2B collaborations and typically sources furniture and textile products through imperfect stock from retailers or manufacturers. In addition to this direct sourcing model, they occasionally work with retail partners to collect materials from consumers through their take-back or donation campaigns. These products are then upcycled and returned to their partners for resale.

One example of this is their collaboration with Madura on the “Madura Conscious”, a line of eco-friendly cushions. Under this collaboration, Madura collected unwanted curtains from individuals in exchange for a shop voucher and handed over the curtains to Studio Emmaüs. The studio then transformed these curtains into a capsule collection of unique cushions sold in Madura’s Parisian boutiques.

Stúdio Emmaüs carries out the design and manufacture of custom design solutions, such as furniture, interior design, or acoustic insulation. For instance, in 2023, they worked with Comédie-Française, a national theatre in Paris, where they helped to revamp the cafeteria. As well as providing upcycled furniture such as table and chairs, they also repurposed old costumes from the theatre to upcycle and create new acoustic panels. This resulted in 10 m² of textiles and 290 kg of wood being reused, while providing approximately 178 hours of meaningful employment for individuals facing barriers in the labour market.

Notably, Stúdio Emmaüs has contributed to the recently inaugurated Virginia-Woolf media library in Paris. They repurposed materials across two of their workshops (i.e. Atelier Emmaüs, Les Résilientes) to design and produce two-thirds of the library’s furniture, together with three other external workshops.⁹ This includes chairs crafted from upcycled materials, display units and bookshelves built from reclaimed wood as well as cushions and wall hangings sewn from textile scraps. Thus, Stúdio Emmaüs has helped shape a welcoming space dedicated to community, exchange and education, demonstrating how creative circular activities can support both functionality and sustainability in public spaces.



© Atelier Emmaüs

“
People are a fundamental pillar of the transformation towards the circular economy. A fully coherent circular economy cannot ignore its social dimension. It must integrate inclusion, solidarity, and social justice because a successful ecological transition is also a just transition, where no one is left behind.
 - Anne Caillebotte, Stúdio Emmaüs coordinator
 ”

Apart from B2B collaborations and public contracts, Stúdio Emmaüs works with other Emmaüs groups to upcycle products that are not in a good condition and/or cannot be sold in their second-hand shops.

The studio also actively promotes environmental awareness by organising workshops for students and employees, focusing on waste management and upcycling initiatives. These sessions not only educate participants about sustainable practices but also foster team-building through engaging, hands-on creative activities.

Since their creation, Stúdio Emmaüs has hosted Christmas markets featuring a wide array of upcycled products such as fashionable clothing, stylish accessories as well as unique furniture and decor, all crafted from materials repurposed in their workshops. For example, in 2024, Stúdio Emmaüs hosted a fully upcycled Christmas market in Paris, complemented by free DIY workshops every Saturday.

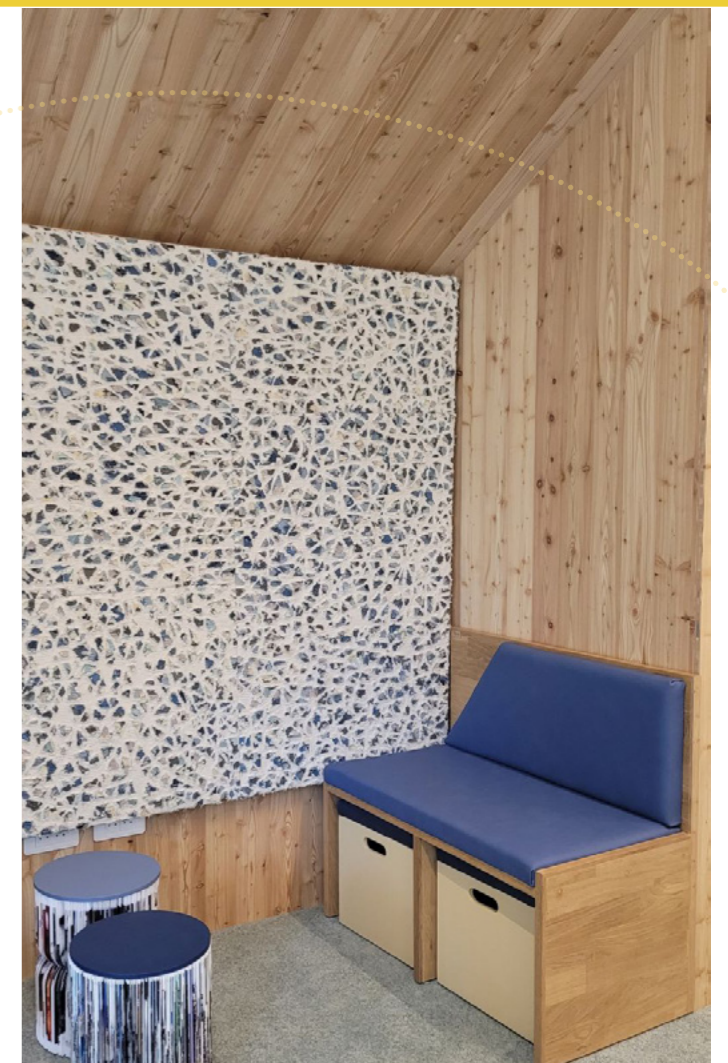
Through these efforts, Stúdio Emmaüs raises awareness on the significance of waste reduction and reuse while empowering people with skills to upcycle their belongings and develop sustainable habits.

Across Stúdio Emmaüs’s workshops, approximately 60 full-time jobs, such as carpenters, textile specialists and designers, are currently dedicated to repurposing materials. Of these, around 40 positions are part of work integration programmes aimed at supporting individuals who face barriers in the labour market. These programmes are partially funded through government subsidies designed to promote social inclusion through employment.

Many participants in the work integration programmes gain sewing or woodworking skills on the job. They are supported by dedicated mentors who help them navigate workplace challenges and provide tailored training based on their individual needs. Beyond technical expertise, the programme focuses on developing essential soft skills, such as punctuality, teamwork and adapting to workplace routines. This enhances participants’ confidence and increases their chances of securing long-term employment beyond Stúdio Emmaüs.



Renovated cafeteria in Comédie-Française
 © Atelier Emmaüs



Upcycled stools and storage in Virginia-Woolf media library
 © Atelier Emmaüs

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Studio Emmaüs faces several hurdles, including limited storage and retail space for furniture, low engagement from private sector partners and lack of long-term funding. Despite this, being a network of upcycling workshops helps facilitate skills exchange, flexible participation in B2B collaborations and coordinated engagement with external stakeholders. Their work is further supported by partnerships with sustainable design actors, the ability to upcycle at scale and a holistic approach from design to manufacturing that combines social inclusion with environmental responsibility.

CHALLENGES

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Limited physical space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The studio is unable to store larger amounts of furniture, and they lack access to affordable retail space to display their upcycled furniture for sale and for attracting potential collaborators. |
| Low engagement from private sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are limited B2B collaborations with private sector companies looking to supply old furniture and receive upcycled furniture. |
| Inadequate funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The studio does not currently receive core, long-term funding to support their continuity. |

SUCCESS FACTORS

| | |
|--|--|
| A collective of upcycling workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This enables the exchange of skills and knowledge across the collective. It allows the different workshops to enter the public market as a group, making it easier for them to respond to calls for proposals. It provides flexibility for some or all of the workshops to participate in B2B collaborations, depending on project needs and the workshops' capacities. |
| Centralised coordination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordinator role centralises responsibilities and communications across the different upcycling workshops, including prospecting for potential partnerships, demonstrating the work from different workshops and communicating with external stakeholders. |
| Collaborating with key actors in sustainable development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with key actors (e.g. architects and companies involved in reuse design) gives the collective ability to respond to a range of requests across different types of furniture and textile products. |
| Large-scale manufacturing processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coupled with large donations of the same items, the studio's ability to upcycle at a large scale enables them to supply materials or products in consistent batches that match the same quality standards. |
| Holistic and collaborative approach from design to manufacturing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach allows the studio to minimise their environmental footprint by designing upcycled products sustainably. By engaging their staff, including integration workers, early from the design phase, the studio fosters a sense of ownership in their staff for their day-to-day work, facilitating a social and ecological transition. |
| Anti-waste law in France | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has resulted in a rise in the number of public contracts with the obligation to reuse, providing more opportunities for the studio to engage in public upcycling contracts (e.g. they won a tender in 2024 by the City of Paris with Adopte un Bureau, a company that specialises in supplying second-hand furniture to businesses, to supply upcycled furniture to the city's department). |

2.3. CENTER PONOVNE UPORABE



| | |
|---|--|
| Social enterprise or network | Center Ponovne Uporabe |
| Product stream | Furniture, Mattresses |
| Activity | Reuse |
| Country | Slovenia |
| Year started | 2012 |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household or individual donations Donations from the hospitality sector Donations from mainstream businesses Donations from the public sector |
| Destination of product stream | Sold in shops |
| Partnerships | None |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial subsidies from national budget Revenues from product and/or material resale EU-funded project(s) |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 21–50 |

INTRODUCTION

Center Ponovne Uporabe (CPU) is a social enterprise established in 2010, the first reuse centre in Slovenia. They have established almost 20 reuse centres in Slovenia and are currently operating four distinct centres, with the other centres being operated by municipalities. What sets their centres apart from most reuse stores in Slovenia is that they collect items directly and resell them after preparing them for reuse. Their mission is to enhance the diversion of items from waste to reusable products while simultaneously creating employment opportunities for people facing barriers in the labour market.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

Most of the furniture and mattresses received by CPU come from direct donations to their reuse centres and from what they collect from public waste management centres. The largest input of furniture and mattresses comes from their location in Ljubljana. In 2025, they launched public door-to-door collections, focusing primarily on furniture. Once part of their inventory, staff prepare these items for reuse through necessary repair and cleaning before they are resold in their stores.

CPU sells both furniture and mattresses at all four of their locations. Furniture typically sells quickly once it is on store display, making CPU's collection activities vital for ensuring a steady supply of second-hand stock. By contrast, mattresses sell more slowly and unsold items are discounted to encourage sales.



© Center Ponovne Uporabe

Alongside collecting and reselling furniture and mattresses, CPU has been active in numerous regional and national projects on waste management and the circular economy. For example, from 2022 to 2024, they were involved in a project, Studio of Circular Economy (StudioKroG), which was funded by Norway grants in a consortium with four other partners, ZRS Bistra Ptuj, OKP Rogaška Slatina, RRC Ormož and Fonix.

In this project, they constructed a studio from six interconnected shipping containers (lengths of 12 m and 6 m) at two locations, namely in Slovenske Konjice and Rogaška Slatina. They collaborated with industrial partners to source discarded surplus materials, such as furniture, textiles, electronics, and natural materials (e.g. cotton fibres, reed), with which to renovate these containers into fully functional demonstration centres. These centres have since been used as venues to host events on circular economy practices, such as furniture transformation workshops that provide the opportunity for citizens to learn upcycling techniques and transform old furniture pieces into unique masterpieces.

Projects such as StudioKroG not only enable collaborations amongst social economy entities within the circular economy, but also facilitate collaborations with relevant industrial partners to extend the lifespan of different product streams.

As part of their workforce, CPU employs people who face barriers in the labour market, particularly individuals with special needs. These people receive prior training, where they learn the basic processes for preparing these bulky waste streams for reuse, including how to deep clean (mattresses), store and price them. Currently, they have 36 full-time roles, of which over 20 are based on work integration contracts and are supported by wage subsidies.



© Center Ponovne Uporabe

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

CPU faces significant challenges, including limited availability of reusable items which make e-commerce operations difficult to sustain. Their lack of long-term public funding limits their ability to reinvest and scale, and the planned closure of their largest Ljubljana store in 2026 potentially threatens their operations. Nevertheless, CPU has implemented strategies that help maintain and strengthen their operations, including integrating collection and resale points at reuse centres and diversifying their funding sources.

⚠️ CHALLENGES

| | |
|---|---|
| Demand and supply in rural areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside the capital, Slovenia is predominantly rural, resulting in a lower availability of items suitable for reuse. This limited volume does not generate enough revenue to offset logistics and service costs in e-commerce. • Demand for reused items is also lower in these areas with fewer potential buyers. |
| Inadequate funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although CPU locations handle materials that would otherwise become waste and their work directly supports all publicly funded waste management centres in Slovenia, they do not receive public funding as they are not classified as waste management centres. • Their lack of long-term funding limits their ability to reinvest and scale operations. |
| Closure of the largest store | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impending loss of their Ljubljana store in 2026 due to the demolition of the building, coupled with high rental prices and the lack of suitable space in the capital city, poses a serious challenge for their operations and reuse accessibility in the region. |

🏆 SUCCESS FACTORS

| | |
|---|--|
| Integrating collection and resale points | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locating collection and resale points at CPU's reuse centres streamlines logistics, reducing manpower, time and costs required to transport donated items to their point of sale. |
| Diversified sources of funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in regional initiatives (e.g. Norway grants projects, EU-funded projects) and national projects, combined with financial subsidies for insertion employment and revenue from product resale has helped CPU sustain their operations. |

2.4. RE-USE AUSTRIA



| | |
|---|--|
| Social enterprise or network | Re-Use Austria |
| Product stream | Furniture |
| Activity | Reuse, Repair & Refurbishment |
| Country | Austria |
| Year started | 2004 |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household or individual donations Donations from hospitality sector |
| Destination of product stream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sold in shops Sold through an online platform Distributed directly to people in need |
| Partnerships | Mainstream businesses |
| Funding sources | <p>Re-Use Austria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU-funded project(s) Project funding from national authorities Contract work¹⁰ Membership fees <p>Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants from public budget(s) |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | Differs across the different member organisations |

INTRODUCTION

Re-Use Austria (formerly known as RepaNet) is a non-profit umbrella organisation lobbying for social economy enterprises active in the circular economy. It has over 40 members that are active in the reuse sector and working with textiles, electronic equipment and bulky waste, among other goods.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

Organisations in Re-Use Austria’s network primarily receive donations from private individuals who usually deliver items directly to second-hand shops. Staff members then clean, price, and prepare these goods for resale, and in some cases even reconstruct new pieces from separate furniture parts that were donated. However, unlike textiles and smaller goods, furniture and mattresses are less frequently brought to sorting centres due to the significant space and transport involved.

To overcome this logistical constraint, Re-Use Austria’s members conduct household collections. Donors typically pay a pickup fee. In rare instances, fees may be reduced if the expected resale value offsets logistics costs. In Austria, collection charges differ depending on the size and capacity of the organisation: large social enterprises with extensive warehouses and high stock turnover can offer lower rates, while smaller organisations may need to charge approximately €60 - €100 per hour. Some organisations also use flat-rate pricings and schedule pickups based on photos submitted by donors.

“
Insufficient storage and display space limits sales potential in many regions. In some areas in Austria, only 300-500 m² of a 1,000 m² shop is dedicated to furniture, restricting customer draw. Nonetheless, furniture reuse generally remains a core activity in reuse organisations.
 ”

- Peter Wagner, Re-Use Austria Project Management Lead



© Caritas Wien

Preparing furniture for reuse frequently requires specialised skills, while Re-Use Austria’s members focus on providing employment for people who face barriers in the mainstream labour market and typically lack those skills. Circular social enterprises provide their upskilling, but this part of their activities is the least economically viable and requires additional public funding.

In 2022, Re-Use Austria launched WIDADO, an online marketplace for reuse products from social enterprises in Austria. In addition to home delivery, WIDADO offers click-and-collect services, allowing customers to order items online and pick them up in person, a more cost-effective and environmentally-friendly alternative. Bulky items such as furniture and mattresses, which were traditionally available only in brick-and-mortar stores, can now be purchased online through the click-and-collect service, since home delivery is not offered for these larger products.

The sales on the WIDADO platform are mostly concentrated in Vienna and its outskirts due to the high shipment costs and logistical complexity involved. Furthermore, furniture and mattress sales through click-and-collect are not as common as other product categories (e.g. clothing, books, kitchenware, etc.) and are usually limited to small items that can fit in a parcel (approximately within 50 cm). Consequently, while their online sales are the main source of revenue; furniture, particularly large items, and mattresses remain primarily a brick-and-mortar sales category.



Publicity image for the WIDADO platform © Re-Use Austria



We use AI to automate some processes, for example descriptions, to make it easier for workers with lower qualifications. A challenge is that each product sold online has to be shipped, and furniture also has to be dismantled and reassembled at each step, including delivery.

- Matthias Neitsch, Re-Use Austria Managing Director



Besides serving as an online marketplace, WIDADO is also a digital platform with an interactive map of social enterprises' locations to help individuals identify where they can donate reusable objects or purchase second-hand items. Despite relatively low turnover of bulky items, digital platforms such as WIDADO can support the sale of such items and improve data collection to optimise sales.

Re-Use Austria's members typically employ people in work integration contracts, enabling them to build skills and confidence across a range of tasks, from logistics operations to furniture repair, refurbishment and sales support. According to Re-Use Austria, many participants have successfully transitioned to permanent roles, particularly roles in logistics, driving and commercial furniture sales. Several of these social enterprises maintain partnerships with external companies, including furniture retailers and shipping firms, that further provide employment pathways for their employees.

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Re-Use Austria's members face skill gaps among employees and rely on a small number of highly skilled staff, creating operational bottlenecks, while limited storage constrain the volume of furniture and mattresses they can handle. At the same time, these social enterprises also leverage key success factors, including diversified funding sources and integration with social services, enabling them to provide essential furnishings for shelters and transitional housing while aligning social and environmental objectives.

CHALLENGES

| | |
|---|---|
| Skill gaps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some employees face health-related constraints that make heavy lifting difficult, increasing the risk of furniture damage during transport or reassembly. Most repair and upcycling tasks still rely heavily on a small group of permanent, highly skilled staff as these activities require advanced, specialised expertise, creating a bottleneck in operations. |
| Limited physical space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises are unable to store larger amounts of furniture, and they lack access to affordable retail space to display their second-hand furniture and mattresses for sale. |
| Difficulty in achieving financial sustainability for furniture reuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furniture and mattress reuse in Austria is not yet commercially self-sustainable for these social enterprises. Social enterprises rely on limited public funding and often prioritise higher-revenue items, such as clothing or household goods to sustain their operations. |
| E-commerce challenges for bulky items | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online sales are currently limited to small, parcel-sized items, making large furniture and mattresses primarily reliant on in-store, brick-and-mortar sales despite e-commerce being the main revenue source for other products. |

SUCCESS FACTORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Diversified sources of funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public funding for work integration, combined with additional grants for circular economy initiatives, provides financial stability and allows social enterprises to align social and environmental goals. |
| Integration with social services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some members of Re-Use Austria (e.g. Caritas and Volkshilfe) operate multiple departments offering social services; this enables reuse activities to support broader social programs, such as shelters and transitional housing, providing essential furnishings and directly meeting the needs of people in vulnerable situations. |

2.5. STELLA'S VOICE



| | |
|---|---|
| Social enterprise or network | Stella's Voice |
| Product stream | Furniture, Mattresses |
| Activity | Reuse |
| Country | UK (Scotland) |
| Year started | 2025 ¹¹ |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household or individual donations Donations from hospitality sector National or local bulky waste collection programs Surplus goods from mainstream businesses |
| Destination of product stream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sold in shops Distributed directly to people in need |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises Mainstream businesses Public authorities |
| Funding sources | None |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | None - the staff currently involved are employed through activities from other product streams as the initiative is still in the early stages. |

INTRODUCTION

Stella’s Voice is a UK-registered charity that works to protect children and young people in vulnerable situations by offering safe homes, education and long-term support. They partner with a range of local and regional stakeholders, including local authorities, housing associations, social services and charities, to provide for people in extreme poverty or hardship with material goods, including furniture and mattresses. At the same time, they collect, prepare for reuse and sell second-hand items in their six retail shops, whose proceeds go towards supporting their humanitarian efforts.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

In recent years, Stella’s Voice has been receiving a large number of bed frames but only around 20% of them had mattresses suitable for reuse. This shortfall was largely due to the strict requirements surrounding mattress use; each must comply with fire safety regulations, be in good condition and free from tears or significant staining. Through an on-site visit via Community Learning Exchange,¹² they observed the mattress cleaning operations at Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company, before establishing their own initiative in 2025. Their objective was to transform what would have been landfill waste into safe, high-quality reusable items and maximise the use of donated bed frames and mattresses.

In Scotland, UK, Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company (CFRC) began their mattress cleaning operations in 2022. They accept mattress donations suitable for resale and deep clean each one before putting it for sale in a showroom.

CFRC’s work is supported by funding from Zero Waste Scotland’s Recycling Improvement Fund, which contributes to professional cleaning equipment, staff training and the installation of mattress-specific reuse containers in local council areas.¹³

CFRC has partnered with North Ayrshire Council, giving them access to mattresses collected at household waste recycling centres.¹⁴ This partnership enables them to create direct social impact by supplying cleaned second-hand mattresses to individuals seeking social assistance.¹⁵ They have scaled up significantly, increasing the number of mattresses reused from 492 in 2021 to 869 in 2025. In addition, they provide employment and training opportunities to people who face barriers to entering the traditional labour market.

Stella Voice’s mattress cleaning initiative is supported by the Scottish Government’s Recycling Improvement Fund and through various partnerships, including that with Aberdeenshire Council and a social enterprise, Instant Neighbour. Under this partnership, Aberdeenshire Council collects used mattresses from residents through their household recycling centres and delivers them to Stella’s Voice. The council’s Homeless Service in turn orders reuse items, including mattresses, from Stella’s Voice to furnish temporary housing for people.¹⁶ The remaining mattresses are distributed through Stella’s Voice’s and Instant Neighbour’s reuse shops, where profits are reinvested into the former’s humanitarian projects.

In practice, the team at Stella’s Voice first inspect mattresses for any damage or contamination and check whether they still have their blue fire label,¹⁷ which is a safety requirement. They then professionally clean the mattresses, including vacuuming to remove dust and debris, followed by surface wiping or spot cleaning as needed with highly specialised equipment. The mattresses are then sorted, and reusable ones are moved to a designated drying area equipped with a dehumidifier for a few hours. This helps remove residual moisture from both the mattress and the surrounding air, speeding up drying time and reducing the risk of mould and odours. Throughout these processes, there is appropriate preparation to ensure hygiene and safety. The staff, for instance, wear safety gear, including personal protective equipment (PPE), goggles and ear muffs.

As Stella’s Voice’s mattress cleaning initiative is still in its early stages, the team is closely monitoring collection and cleaning processes to assess their effectiveness and identify opportunities for growth. By gathering insights from this initial phase, they aim to determine the best approach for scaling the project sustainably and efficiently.

In addition, Stella’s Voice provides placement opportunities for individuals who face barriers in the labour market. This includes individuals who are preparing for release from prison as well as individuals with special needs, who are guided to build routines, develop work habits, and gain practical experience. These programs enable participants to gain hands-on experience in a supportive environment while contributing meaningfully to their operations.

“
I am a firm believer of not duplicating someone’s work unless there is a real need. If someone else is already doing it, support them instead. Everyone can do what they are good at, build partnerships with each other to form an extensive support network and create a stronger impact together.
 - Mark Morgan,
 Stella’s Voice CEO



© Stella’s Voice

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Stella’s Voice encounters considerable challenges in mattress reuse, including damage during collection, low-quality and limited donations, and rising staff and energy costs that make processing financially difficult. They also navigate complex legislation, such as the UK’s POPs regulations which require significant time and resources to ensure compliant cleaning and handling processes. In spite of these obstacles, Stella’s Voice has maintained their operations through simple mattress repair techniques that increase recovery rates and an extensive partner network.

⚠️ CHALLENGES

| | |
|--|---|
| Mattress damage during collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mattresses are often perforated or damaged when donors drag them to vehicles or collection points, making them unsuitable for reuse. |
| Complex legislation and regulations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stella’s Voice has had to undergo a steep learning curve, continuously adapting to complex legislation and regulations relating to mattresses (e.g. the introduction of UK’s POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants) legislation has imposed strict controls on how materials containing certain chemicals can be handled or destroyed). • They have thus had to invest considerable time and resources to adapt accordingly and develop a comprehensive framework for mattress cleaning, which has helped formalise their operational processes. |
| Low quality and quantity of donations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rise of C2C platforms like Facebook Marketplace has reduced the availability of reusable items. |
| Economic constraints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising staff and energy costs make processing low-cost, donated mattresses financially non-viable, as handling costs may approach or exceed their original retail price. |

SUCCESS FACTORS

| | |
|--|---|
| Mattress repair techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stella’s Voice has developed repair techniques that improve mattress recovery rates (e.g. minor tears or abrasions can be repaired using iron-on patches, allowing slightly damaged mattresses to be safely reused). |
| Extensive and collaborative partner network | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stella’s Voice works with a diverse network of partners, from local authorities to social enterprises that strengthen every stage of their mattress operations, from ensuring a steady mattress supply to providing community support through donations of professionally cleaned mattresses. |

2.6. OXFAM BELGIË/BELGIQUE'S IMPACT FURNITURE



| | |
|---|--|
| Social enterprise or network | Oxfam België/Belgique |
| Product stream | Furniture |
| Activity | Repair & Refurbishment, Upcycling, Recycling |
| Country | Belgium |
| Year started | 2001 ¹⁸ |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National or local bulky waste collection programs Donations from mainstream businesses and non-profit organisations Donations from the public sector |
| Destination of product stream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributed directly to people in need Used to furnish public spaces Leasing / Product-as-a-Service |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises Mainstream businesses Public authorities |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial subsidies from national and local public budgets EU-funded project(s) |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 1–5 |

INTRODUCTION

As a department of Oxfam België/Belgique, IMPACT Furniture provides a trade-in and resale service for quality office furniture for professionals who would like to have a strong social and environmental impact. They offer a catalogue of furniture produced using upcycled materials from old furniture primarily obtained from the European Commission.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

IMPACT Furniture’s Upcycle Your Office project started in 2020 when they won a contract with the European Commission to receive all their old furniture to give it a second life. In 2022, they developed the business plan, adding the furniture prototype for production and commercialisation in 2023 and 2024 respectively. Their work is funded by Bruxelles Environment, the public administration for environment and energy in Brussels.

In 2022 alone, they received approximately 10 offices’ worth of desks, which is around 22,000 goods or 808 tonnes in total. After receiving them, they dismantled and removed their components, including wood panels, metal and plastic to create new furniture. This was achieved by working with the eco-design agency of an established Belgian designer, Alain Berteau, Designworks, where they developed a catalogue of six furniture objects: ottomans, coffee tables, high cafeteria tables, dividers, single shelves and chairs. They then contracted local social carpentry companies in Brussels, which are enterprises that hire disabled people (known as “Entreprises de Travail Adapté” in French), to produce the furniture.

A priority in IMPACT Furniture’s business model is to limit the environmental impact of their work. To this end, they cut the wood panels with Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines, specialised equipment that reduces waste, and aims to use all the materials available.¹⁹ In their furniture catalogue, they remove the need for gluing or screwing, and design products that can be easily dismantled at end-of-life for optimal reuse and recycling of their parts. Their efforts have thus resulted in a very high reuse rate and low waste rate (see Table 2).



© Oxfam België/Belgique

Table 2. Reuse, recycling and waste rates of donated furniture in 2022

| | Number of goods | Tonnes of goods |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Reuse rate | 89.0% | 73.4% |
| Recycling rate | 3.4% | 7.1% |
| Waste rate | 7.6% | 19.4% |

Additionally, IMPACT Furniture only makes-to-order, thus ensuring that all the furniture they upcycle will be delivered and used. They focus only on B2B partnerships to ensure they can respond to a bulk order, and maximise the efficiency of their work and the reuse or upcycling rate of furniture they receive. An example of this partnership is their contract with the European Commission to furnish multiple offices in the Berlaymont Building, the Commission’s headquarters in Brussels.

Apart from waste prevention, IMPACT Furniture strives to provide solid quality furniture at budget-friendly prices for their customers. They offer furniture in two main price ranges: unsold upcycled furniture and furniture in good condition with some signs of use. The price corresponding to each of these two categories is fair and accessible, and significantly lower than the original purchase price. Other than the European Commission, their customers include NGOs, non-profit organisations and smaller businesses that prefer to have affordable options while supporting social and environmental causes. Their furniture comes with a one-month warranty period, during which if the item is found to be defective, it will be replaced.

As part of their upcycling work, IMPACT Furniture gives priority to employing people who face barriers in the labour market, such as people who have disabilities or were former prisoners, to provide them with new professional opportunities.



CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

IMPACT Furniture deals with several operational limitations, including limited storage space and manpower, and fluctuating monthly donation volumes. Despite these constraints, the Oxfam België/Belgique department addresses a market need through their Upcycle Your Office programme, providing sustainable, upcycled office furniture that meets modern workplace requirements. By leveraging high-profile partnerships, such as with the European Commission and innovative reuse projects like supplying reclaimed wood for the ONU staircase, IMPACT Furniture demonstrates both credibility and versatility in furniture reuse.

CHALLENGES

| | |
|---|---|
| Limited storage space and manpower | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMPACT Furniture’s 2,000 m² facility restricts the volume of furniture donations they can receive. Their small team of six limits their capacity to take on additional projects beyond current European Commission and small business collaborations. |
| Fluctuating donation volumes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly donations fluctuate significantly from month-to-month (e.g. from 5,000 to 10,000 items), making planning of resources difficult. |
| Quality issues with donations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furniture from some companies is in poor condition and unsuitable for reuse or upcycling, resulting in IMPACT Furniture investing uncompensated manpower and time for examining the goods. |

SUCCESS FACTORS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Meeting a market need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMPACT Furniture’s Upcycle Your Office programme addresses a gap in the market by giving unwanted office furniture a second life. By providing a wide range of office furniture (e.g. ergonomic chairs, desks, cabinets, acoustic panels, storage bins) from old materials, they provide practical solutions that meet modern office needs. This approach not only diverts waste but also offers businesses a sustainable alternative to purchasing new furniture. |
| High-profile projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMPACT Furniture has a partnership with the European Commission to receive their old furniture and upcycle them to furnish the Commission’s multiple office spaces, building their credibility as a trusted and reliable organisation. |
| Innovative furniture reuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beyond upcycling office furniture, IMPACT Furniture supplied wood panels from old furniture to build the staircase in the ONU building in Brussels, highlighting their ability to deliver high-quality versatile solutions with reclaimed materials. |

2.7. HET GOED

| | |
|---|---|
| Social enterprise or network | Het Goed |
| Product stream | Furniture, Mattresses |
| Activity | Reuse, Repair & Refurbishment |
| Country | Netherlands |
| Year started | 1992 |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household or individual donations Donations from hospitality sector National or local bulky waste collection programs Donations from mainstream businesses |
| Destination of product stream | Sold in shops |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises Mainstream businesses Public authorities |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenues from product and/or material resale Financial subsidies from national and/or local public budget (e.g. wage subsidies) |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 21–50 |

INTRODUCTION

Het Goed is a major Dutch social enterprise committed to creating opportunities for people through reuse. They collect used items, ranging from furniture, mattresses, clothing, housewares, and books to electronics, to give them a second life through their network of 30 second-hand stores. By offering high-quality second-hand items at a fraction of the cost of new goods, Het Goed also provides affordable options to consumers, making sustainable practices accessible to a wider segment of the population.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

In terms of furniture and mattresses, Het Goed collects these bulky waste items from multiple channels before preparing them for reuse. Their intake streams include donations from businesses, and collection and waste management contracts, where they recover reusable goods collected at waste collection points before they are discarded.²⁰ Het Goed also accepts furniture and mattress donations at their stores’ drop-off points while offering a free pickup service for reusable items from locations near their stores.^{21,22}

Beyond standard donations, Het Goed supports people clearing out entire homes, an often complex and emotionally demanding process. Through their estate clearance services, the organisation offers respectful and efficient home clearances, where reusable items are identified, collected and given a second life in Het Goed’s stores.²³ This provides a much-needed solution for families or individuals managing transitions.

Once items are received, Het Goed’s trained staff sort the items into different product streams and inspect each piece for its condition and usability. All of this is carried out by employees who are gaining skills and experience as part of Het Goed’s reintegration programs. All suitable items are then cleaned and restored, when necessary, and prepared

for resale, including labelling, pricing and arranging for in-store or online presentation. For bulky purchases, Het Goed also offers delivery services, making reuse accessible and practical for customers.

Building on this core reuse model, Het Goed has engaged in B2B collaborations with mainstream retailers. For instance, Het Goed received donations of surplus reusable furniture from IKEA's Circular Hubs where returned furniture, display models, trade-in items and imperfect stock are refurbished and resold at a lower price.²⁴ Customers whose used IKEA furniture did not qualify for trade-in but remained reusable were referred to Het Goed's free home pickup service, further extending product lifecycles. However, with IKEA's expansion of Circular Hubs across all stores and focus on selling overstock and buy-back products internally, donations to Het Goed have largely stopped in recent years.

The sorting and processing of reusable furniture and mattresses at Het Goed provides valuable employment to people who face barriers in the labour market, such as long-term unemployment, limited education or disabilities. Through their Werkwarenhuis ("Work Department Store") model, participants receive structured guidance, learn professional and social skills, and rotate through roles in logistics, retail, transport and catering.²⁵ When the employees are ready and meet their internal criteria, they are then supported in transitioning into regular employment. Het Goed works with local partners, including municipalities, institutions and social employment companies to strengthen these reintegration pathways.

In addition, Het Goed is a participant in the national Work Accelerator, launched by a coalition of social enterprises to give people immediate access to employment and development opportunities. At participating branches, individuals begin working or training without delay, supported by coaching and certification programs.²⁶

As a result of their inclusive approach and high-quality workforce reintegration, Het Goed has been awarded the highest (PSO 30+) certification, a national standard recognising excellence in social entrepreneurship.²⁷

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Het Goed experiences challenges in their operations, such as quality issues with donations, logistical constraints due to bulky items, and complexities in establishing and maintaining B2B partnerships. Nevertheless, the organisation has strong initiatives, such as circular innovation projects and structured workforce reintegration programs that align both the social and environmental impact of their work.

CHALLENGES

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Quality issues with donations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donated furniture and mattresses are sometimes broken, soiled, or otherwise unfit for reuse, increasing sorting time, manpower needs and disposal costs. |
| Logistical constraints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The bulky nature of furniture and mattresses requires significant storage space and leads to higher transport costs. Free pickup services sometimes result in receiving items that cannot be resold, adding to operational inefficiencies. |
| B2B partnership challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As B2B partners internalise circular activities, donation streams that previously supported social enterprises can diminish or disappear entirely. While large retailers may express strong interest for B2B partnerships with social enterprises, implementation at the level of individual stores can prove complex. For instance, upcycling projects have been discontinued due to operational constraints. |

SUCCESS FACTORS

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| Circular innovation projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Het Goed actively explores new circular opportunities with innovative approaches to reuse and upcycle furniture, supporting their circular business models and exchanging innovative solutions and skills with like-minded organisations. |
| High-quality workforce reintegration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Het Goed provides structured employment pathways for people facing barriers in the labour market, alongside participation in national programmes such as the Work Accelerator and partnerships with local partners to further strengthen these pathways. |

2.8. INSIEME COOPERATIVA SOCIALE



ITALY

| | |
|---|---|
| Social enterprise or network | Insieme Cooperativa Sociale |
| Product stream | Furniture, Mattresses |
| Activity | Reuse, Recycling |
| Country | Italy |
| Year started | 1979 |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household or individual donations National or local bulky waste collection programs Surplus goods from mainstream businesses Clearing out of businesses²⁸ |
| Destination of product stream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sold in shops Leasing / Product-as-a-Service Sent for external recycling |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises Mainstream businesses Public authorities |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenues from product and/or material resale Preparation for Reuse Fee (PfR fee) Public tax relief scheme |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 51–100 |

INTRODUCTION

Insieme Cooperativa Sociale (hereby referred to as Insieme) is a social cooperative active in Vicenza, Italy. In the late 1970s, a group of citizens noticed that the economic boom in Northeast Italy saw a rise in consumerism, which resulted in massive amounts of waste produced. This worsened social inequalities with social and employment implications for marginalised communities largely ignored. Hence, Insieme was established to give things and people a second chance.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

Furniture and mattresses are among the many product streams handled by Insieme. They partner with businesses to obtain donations of goods or waste, including good quality and clean mattresses. After they are assessed to be in good condition, these items undergo preparation for reuse and be sold in their second-hand shops.

Insieme engages in a range of activities including civil and bulky waste clearings, textile collection and industrial clearings. At one of the waste collection centres, the public waste management company, Valore Ambiente, has implemented an innovative remuneration system. Under this model, households in Vicenza pay a waste collection and treatment fee to the municipality which is then transferred to Valore Ambiente. The company then allocates part of these funds to finance Insieme's waste management activities in the collection centre, based on the volume of waste collected and the proportion successfully recovered. However, this system initially did not differentiate between preparation for reuse and recycling under the proportion recovered, despite reuse being higher on the waste hierarchy²⁹ and thus more environmentally beneficial.

To address this, an additional variable preparation for reuse fee (PfR fee) was introduced in 2021. This fee specifically rewards the separate collection of items intended for preparation for reuse. As a result, the number of items prepared for reuse rose by over 40% within a year, equivalent to 60 additional tonnes of products. This initiative greatly facilitated separate collection for reuse for citizens looking to donate, who are then encouraged to shop in Insieme's second-hand shops. It has also generated more employment opportunities for individuals at risk of socio-economic exclusion. Since then, other waste management companies in the province have included preparation for reuse activities in their tenders and compensation mechanisms for those who carry them out, reflecting the positive ripple effect of this remuneration model.



© Insieme Cooperativa Sociale

Beyond the public sector, Insieme is expanding their collaborations with private companies. While they continue to provide traditional waste management services (i.e. collecting, sorting and responsibly disposing waste from mainstream companies), they are placing a growing emphasis on the recovery of unsold merchandise. These B2B collaborations are particularly valuable: they provide better remuneration than standard waste management services and in return, Insieme prepares a social and environment impact report for the organisation that is useful for their compliance with legal requirements and corporate social responsibility commitments.

Since 2020, Insieme has implemented rental services to individual customers for organising events, where they lease furniture such as tables, chairs and furnishing accessories. However, they provide this service in a strategic manner, where they not only decide based on whether their inventory can cater for the event, but also consider the purpose of the event and whether they can provide a holistic experience for their clients. For example, Insieme provides furnishing and vintage design items for the wedding ceremonies of people involved in the fashion sector and sustainability networks.³⁰ Nevertheless, this rental service remains a small part of their circular business model, compared to their second-hand shops.

Today, Insieme works with different groups of people, including those with lived experience of substance use, involvement with the criminal justice system, and mental health services, and provides them with insertion opportunities through environmental activities and waste collection. They transform waste into resources at different sites, including two plants authorised for the preparation for reuse in Vicenza and Grisignano,³¹ three retail and one wholesale second-hand shops, e-commerce sales and 10 waste collection centres in the provinces. The team is composed of about 200 people, of which approximately 100 face barriers in the labour market. Over the past 40 years, more than 1,000 of them have found a welcoming and educational environment in the reuse centres of Insieme.

As a social enterprise dedicated to job insertion, with at least 30% of their workforce comprising people who face barriers in the labour market, Insieme receives a tax relief, but this only partially supports the work they do.



We highlight the irony in modern buying habits. Behind the perfection of brand-new items often lies someone's hardship and hidden environmental costs. But behind imperfect items, there is a potential to create positive social and environmental impact. So choose the imperfect item and give it a second chance.

- Marina Fornasier, Insieme Cooperativa Sociale President



© Insieme Cooperativa Sociale

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Insieme faces several obstacles in furniture and mattress reuse, including declining quality of donations, limited physical space for bulky items and constraints on scaling online sales due to lack of storage and consistent funding. To address these issues, the organisation implements initiatives that encourage cultural shifts toward circular practices, highlighting the social and environmental value of repaired or imperfect items. Insieme also leverages digital tracking systems to streamline operations and participates in national networks like Rete 14 Luglio, enabling collaboration and scalable replication of their model across different regions in Italy.

CHALLENGES

| | |
|--|---|
| Declining quality of donations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In today's take-make-dispose economy, the average person consumes more of what are lower quality items and moreover, they are incentivised to try to sell their items through corporate platforms,³² resulting in higher quantities yet poorer quality of items being donated. |
| Limited physical space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Space constraints for bulky waste forces difficult decisions about what can be kept for reuse and what must be discarded. |
| Limited ability to scale online sales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of storage space and funding, as well as the time-consuming nature of managing unique online listings limit their ability to strengthen and expand their e-commerce operations. |

SUCCESS FACTORS

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|---|--|
| Tackling cultural barriers to circular practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insieme's communication campaign approaches the over-consumption issue from a cultural perspective by encouraging people to rethink consumption habits and highlight the social and environmental benefits of choosing repaired or imperfect items over new ones. |
| Digital tracking and coordination systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital tools have significantly improved tracking and coordination, helping Insieme to move items through the system more quickly and avoid storage bottlenecks. They can now track the entire end-of-waste process and effectively monitor items being prepared for reuse and those sent for recycling. |
| Scaling through network partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insieme participates in national networks such as Rete 14 Luglio to collaborate with social enterprises and enable scaling by sharing their model and supporting its adaptation in different regions in Italy, allowing replication tailored to local contexts. |

2.9. ENVIE 2E LORRAINE

| | |
|---|---|
| Social enterprise or network | Envie 2E Lorraine |
| Product stream | Mattresses |
| Activity | Dismantling and reuse of separate parts, Recycling ³³ |
| Country | France |
| Year started | 2014 |
| Source of products | State-approved eco-organisation (i.e. a non-profit entity dedicated to promoting environmental sustainability through activities in the circular economy such as waste reduction, recycling, reuse) |
| Destination of product stream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sold in shops Sent for external recycling |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises State-approved eco-organisation |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial subsidies from national and local public budgets Revenues from product and/or material resale Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 21–50 |

INTRODUCTION

Every year, around five million mattresses are thrown away in France.³⁴ To address the environmental impact of such waste, the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for furnishing was introduced in 2012.³⁵ Based on with the polluter-pays principle, this scheme requires producers (i.e. the company that places the product on the market)³⁶ to take financial responsibility for the entire lifecycle of their products, including waste management. The system is funded through an eco-tax, paid by consumers when purchasing new goods.³⁷ Ecomaison (formerly Eco-mobilier) the state-approved eco-organisation under this scheme, plays a central role in organising and financing the collection, sorting, repair, reuse and recycling of household items and materials, including mattresses, across the country.³⁸

Within this national framework, Envie 2E Lorraine is a partner in delivering practical and socially inclusive solutions. A social enterprise committed to environmental sustainability and job creation, Envie 2E Lorraine is part of the Fédération Envie network, which supports the collection, repair and resale of electrical and electronic equipment while offering job opportunities to people who face barriers in the labour market. Building on this mission, Envie 2E Lorraine has expanded into mattress treatment and recycling since 2014. Today, the organisation has developed an effective system that diverts mattress waste from landfill while reintegrating people into the workforce.

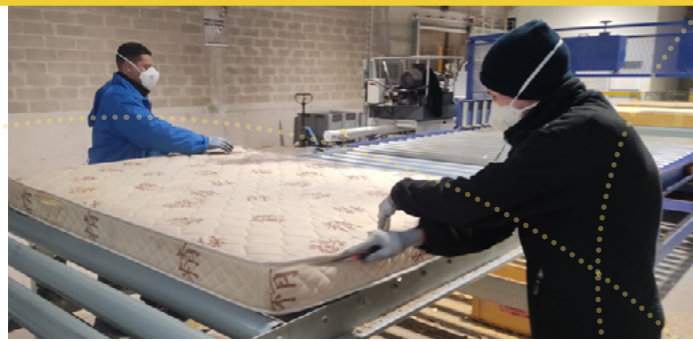
CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

Envie 2E Lorraine partners with Ecomaison to collect mattresses throughout the northeast French region, Grand-Est. At the Envie recycling plant, mattresses undergo a multi-stage dismantling and recycling process. Key components including steel, polyurethane, latex foam, textiles and wood, are separated and grouped using a mix of manual work and machines. Metal detectors are used to identify mattresses containing metal components which are then

automatically sorted from other mattresses. These mattresses are then torn at the front and placed on the separating machine to separate the fabric from the metal frame. Mattresses without metal components, and containing foam will be opened manually with a cutting tool in order to separate the foam from the textile.

After dismantling, these materials are processed into suitable raw materials to be reused in manufacturing (e.g. steel and polyurethane). Their partner, Recyc-Matelas Europe (the RME Group), which further processes and reintegrates materials into industry supply chains, is in charge of defining the outlet for each delivery from the Envie 2E Lorraine site.

To ensure the safety of staff, Envie 2E Lorraine has implemented logistical protocols from the moment mattresses are handled, from sorting centres to recovery preparation centres, in order to avoid any risk of dust contamination. For instance, wearing a mask is mandatory, while handling and cutting mattresses with a cutter does not occur without wearing appropriate gloves and Kevlar cuffs. The processing chain has also been ergonomically designed to optimise workstation layout for operator safety. In the loading area, the chain is positioned at a lower height to facilitate the handling and placement of mattresses. At least two operators work simultaneously along the chain, enabling mutual assistance and reducing physical strain.



Envie staff separating the textile envelope of the mattress from the foam block. They are wearing Kevlar sleeves to protect the arm which is in opposition to the cutting tool, as well as the FFP3 mask and anti-cut gloves. © Envie 2E Lorraine



Separation of the textile materials from the metal spring by tearing off the spring: the textile previously pre-cut on the front of the mattress is held by seams while a clamp pulls the spring. © Envie 2E Lorraine

A key feature of Envie 2E Lorraine’s model is their inclusive employment approach. Their mattress activity has generated 21 jobs for individuals who face barriers in the labour market, alongside four full-time managerial roles.³⁹ The initiative aims to double the number of work positions based on integration contracts, providing meaningful pathways for training and reintegration. Currently, participants are placed on a 24-month employment path, where they receive tailored training that builds on their existing skills and backgrounds, while gaining confidence and technical expertise. The objective is to equip them with the tools to pursue long-term employment opportunities beyond their experience at the recycling plant.

As Envie 2E Lorraine hires people who face barriers in the labour market, they receive public subsidies that further support their operations. Furthermore, they have different income streams where they are supported by revenues from electrical repair services as well as the sale of secondary raw materials, thus rendering their mattress activities economically sustainable. The profits generated are then reinvested into expanding services and employment opportunities.



Polyurethane foam ball for recycling: it comes from the press in which cut foam blocks are compacted © Envie 2E Lorraine

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Envie 2E Lorraine navigates significant operational challenges, including a major fire in 2017 and limited storage space. Yet, they have enhanced their operations through long-term partnerships with a state-approved eco-organisation and strategic B2B collaborations, gaining specialised expertise, infrastructure and fair compensation for mattress treatment. By meeting strong market demand for secondary raw materials and modernising operations, Envie 2E Lorraine has successfully turned some of their challenges into opportunities, diverting mattresses from landfill and reintroducing materials into the manufacturing sector.

CHALLENGES

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Operational disruption | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A major fire in 2017 at Envie 2E Lorraine’s recycling plant caused a temporary shutdown and required four million euros to reestablish their mattress operations. |
| Limited physical space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Envie 2E Lorraine is unable to store larger amounts of mattresses at their recycling plants. Material evacuations must be regular to avoid overstock. |
| Complex material logistics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycling certain materials, such as memory foam, latex and mixed fabrics, remains technically and logistically challenging (e.g. latex foam, often glued to other layers, is bulky, heavy and degrades in ways that complicate mechanical recycling). These materials also have low market value in secondary markets for raw materials, so the cost of collecting, sorting and processing them often exceeds the value recovered. |

SUCCESS FACTORS

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|--|---|
| Long-term partnership with eco-organisation and strategic B2B collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Envie 2E Lorraine’s successful bid in Ecomaison’s tender process enabled them to establish a long-term partnership with the eco-organisation, allowing them to gain access and treat discarded mattresses in the East region in France while receiving fair compensation for their activities. The collaboration with a specialised partner (i.e. Recyc-Matelas Europe) has enabled Envie 2E Lorraine to gain specific expertise, implement specialised infrastructure and provide an outlet for their outgoing materials, ensuring that the materials return to the manufacturing sector while contributing to their revenue stream.⁴⁰ |
| Meeting a market need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With very large quantities of mattresses disposed of by individuals and the tertiary sector, and a consistently high industrial demand for secondary raw materials at low costs (e.g. the demand for mattress textile components for textile-based fuels in industrial boilers), Envie 2E Lorraine is in a pivotal position to transform waste into resources, diverting mattresses from the landfill while reinjecting these materials into the market. |
| Turning crisis into opportunity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-fire reinvestment allowed Envie 2E Lorraine to modernise operations, including introducing machinery that speeds up operations (e.g. a machine that extracted springs from a mattress in a few seconds, compared to 20 minutes previously).⁴¹ |

2.10. KIERRÄTYSKESKUS'S PLAN B WORKSHOP



| | |
|---|---|
| Social enterprise or network | Kierrätyskeskus |
| Product stream | Furniture |
| Activity | Reuse, Repair & Refurbishment, Upcycling, Recycling |
| Country | Finland |
| Year started | 2021 |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household or individual donations Donations from the hospitality sector National or local bulky waste collection programs |
| Destination of product stream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributed directly to people in need Used to furnish public spaces Sent for external recycling |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises Mainstream businesses Public authorities |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants from public budget(s) Financial subsidies from local public budget |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 51–100 |

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, the city of Espoo unveiled the newly revamped Lippulaiva Library in the heart of the Espoonlahti region. The library's transformation was driven by the collaboration between KVA architects and Plan B workshop of Kierrätyskeskus (also known as Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre), a non-profit company that reduces resource consumption, increases environmental awareness and provides employment opportunities for people distanced from the mainstream labour market. This project exemplified how public infrastructure can embrace circularity, engage residents and serve the interests of the community.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

In 2021, the City of Espoo initiated the partnership between KVA Architects and Plan B to reimagine the Lippulaiva library. KVA Architects led the interior architectural vision, ensuring that reused materials aligned with the library's function and identity. At that time, Plan B operated three separate workshops, woodworking, upholstery and sewing, with around 15 art and handicraft employees. The organisation focused on receiving donated furniture from individuals, refurbishing, repairing and selling it through Kierrätyskeskus second-hand shops. As part of their involvement in the library project, Plan B handled the selection and redesign of reused furniture, restoring and preparing around 300 pieces including chairs, tables and shelves from various eras (i.e. ranging primarily from 1940s to 1960s) alongside some modern furniture. While most pieces came from Plan B's inventory, about a third was sourced through the City of Espoo.

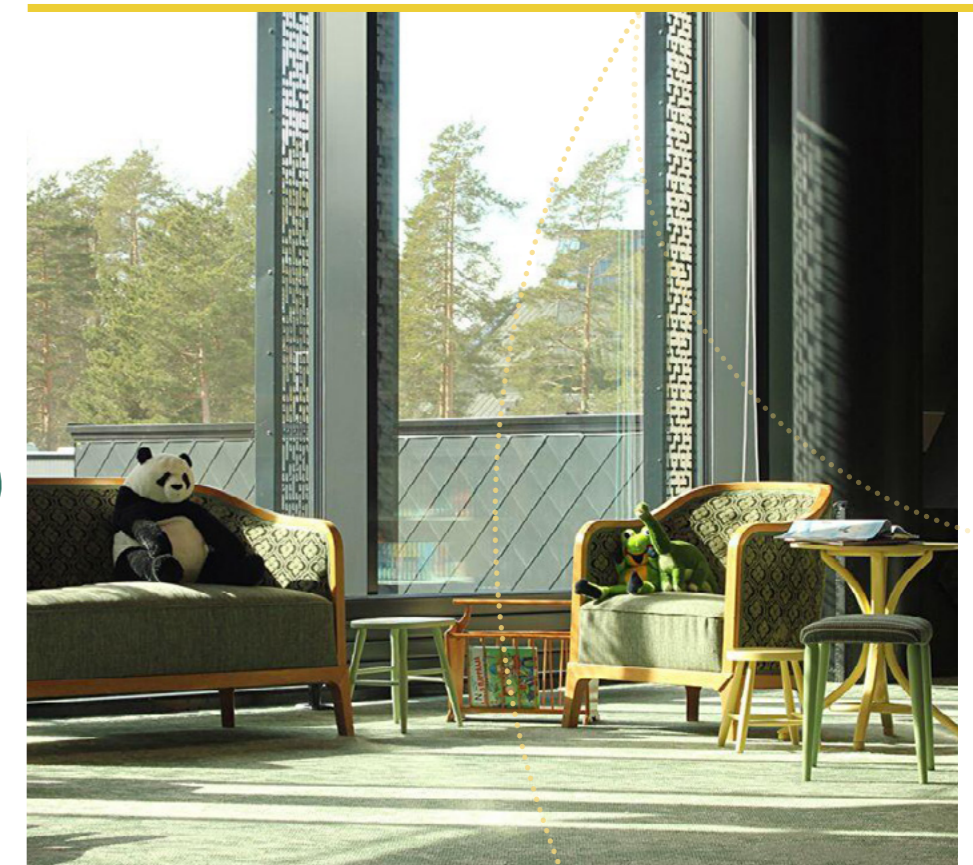
As a result of the deliberate reuse of furniture and materials, the library's interiors now feature items repurposed from other public spaces, including the former Soukka Library and a nightclub in Espoonlahti. These items were integrated into a refreshed design, inspired by the nature and archipelago of the surrounding region. Earthy tones and natural textures were used to create a calm and organic atmosphere in the 3,000-square-metre space, while simultaneously prolonging the life of items that might otherwise have been discarded.

The library's design emphasises community participation, ensuring the space reflects the needs and preferences of local residents. For instance, the library includes a large family area that was requested by local families, a storytime room, a mini-kitchen for children's snack times and a separate gaming space that was designed based on inputs from young adults.⁴²

One of the library's standout features is its work and hobby spaces, which are named by its customers. For example, they named the meeting rooms, Kajuutta (Wheelhouse) and Hytti (Cabin), a multipurpose space for events, Salonki (Salon), and a sewing room, Solmu (Knot).⁴³ Alongside these spaces, the library offers a community kitchen and a dedicated area for clubs.⁴⁴ This collaborative approach strengthens the library's role as a community-oriented space rather than just a repository for books. Since its opening, the library has become a popular gathering place for residents, particularly for families and students.⁴⁵

Working together is a part of our library concept and we invite everyone to give ideas and actualise library concepts and operation and cooperation, for example in book clubs, food preparation and handicrafts.

- Juha Korttesluoma, customer service manager⁴⁶



© Kierrätyskeskus

While large-scale projects like Lippulaiva are not financially viable on their own without funding, they serve as proof-of-concept initiatives that demonstrate the value and feasibility of circular practices in the public sector and offer a reference for other public procurement projects seeking to integrate sustainability and community engagement.

In addition to promoting reuse through their shops and through circularity projects such as the Lippulaiva Library, Kierrätyskeskus and their Plan B workshop offers temporary jobs in the form of a work trial to people who face barriers in the labour market. These workers can take advantage of job coaching services to improve their job skills and help them apply for further studies or jobs in the open labour market. After completing their work trial, these individuals have the opportunity to continue at the social enterprise through wage-subsidised employment. Ultimately, the aim is to help them build skills and confidence to seek long-term employment elsewhere.

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Plan B faces operational constraints due to a lack of long-term funding which limits their capacity to undertake multidisciplinary projects as well as skill gaps among artisans and competition that further restrict the scale and efficiency of their operations. However, their collaborative project culture, built on regular discussions, clear objectives and strong stakeholder coordination, has enabled successful project implementation that can serve as a model for similar initiatives.

CHALLENGES

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|--|---|
| Lack of long-term funding mechanism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan B no longer operates the sewing workshop that existed during the scope of the Lippulaiva library project, limiting their ability to take on similar multidisciplinary projects unless new funding allows for reestablishing this capacity. |
| Skill gaps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The shortage of skilled artisans required for high-quality refurbishment limits the scale of their operations. |
| Competition from commercial second-hand retailers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The growing vintage and second-hand market for furniture competes for both good-quality furniture supply and customers. |

SUCCESS FACTORS

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| Collaborative project culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular discussions, clear objectives and strong coordination among stakeholders have resulted in successful implementation that can be replicated in future projects. |
|--------------------------------------|--|

2.11. REUSE FEDERACE

| | |
|---|--|
| Social enterprise or network | Reuse Federace |
| Product stream | Furniture |
| Activity | Reuse, Repair & Refurbishment, Upcycling |
| Country | Czech Republic |
| Year started | 2021 |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household or individual donations National or local bulky waste collection programs Donations from mainstream businesses |
| Destination of product stream | Distributed directly to people in need |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises Public authorities |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants from public budget(s) Funding from national authorities Membership fees⁴⁷ |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 11–20 (including volunteers) |

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, Reuse Federace, or the Czech Federation of Furniture Banks and Reuse Centres, was launched. Inspired by the well-established model of food banks, it aims to serve a similar redistributive function to individuals and households in need of support, but in the domain of furniture. Within this collaborative framework, member organisations work together in an intricate network involving collaboration with NGOs and municipal partners that coordinate directly with people in need of material aid.



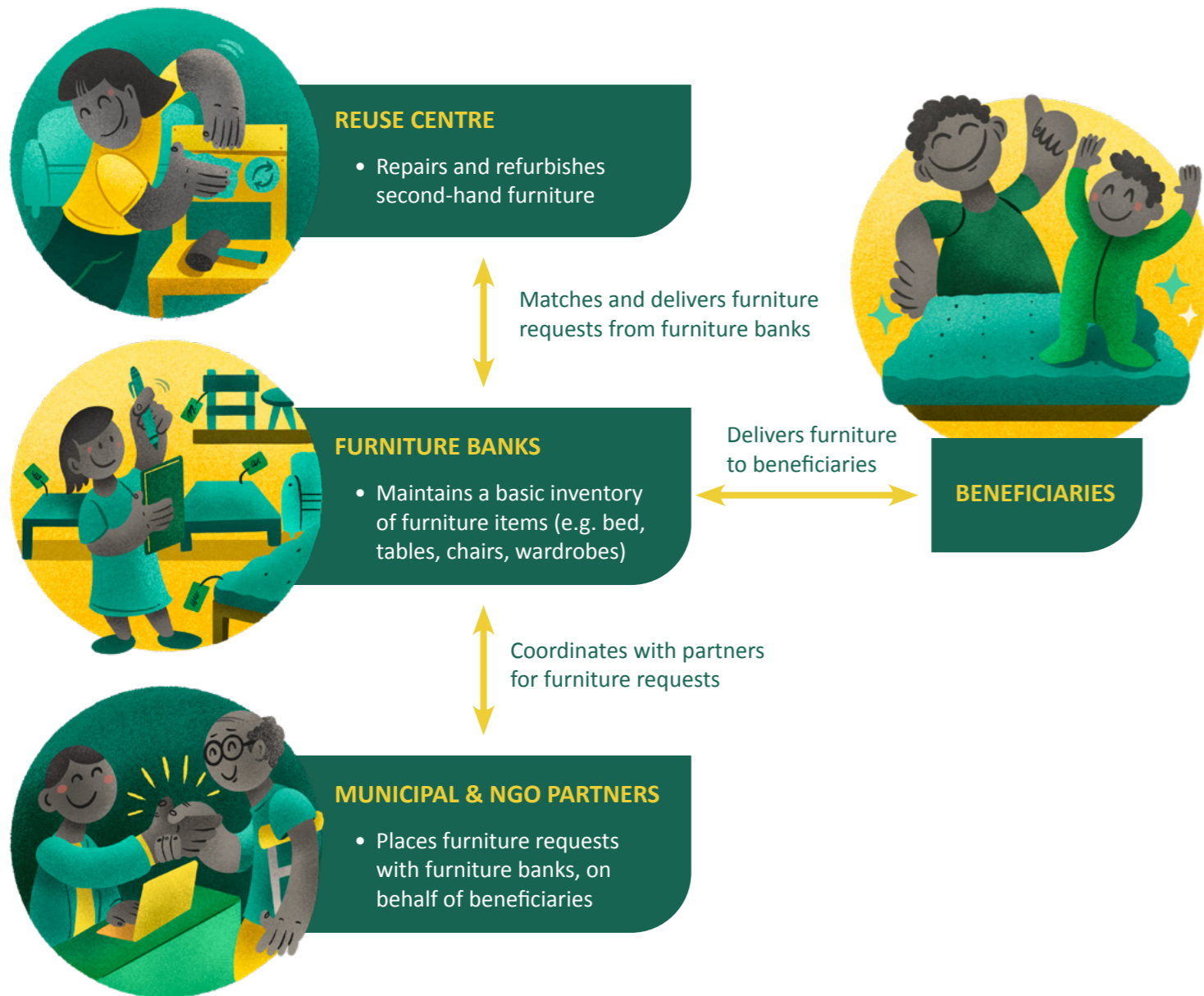
© Nábytkové banky

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

An example of a reuse centre in this network is Kabinet CB, a social enterprise based in České Budějovice that specialises in the repair, renovation and redesign of second-hand furniture and household goods. Kabinet CB plays an essential role in this ecosystem by responding to specific furniture requests submitted by the furniture banks. Between 2021 and 2023, the organisation supplied approximately 250 tonnes of furniture and household equipment to furniture banks within the network.

The federation currently operates five furniture banks located across different regions of the Czech Republic. These furniture banks are non-profit organisations that serve a logistical and operational function within the partnership. Each bank maintains a core inventory of about 25 types of furniture items, including beds, tables, chairs and wardrobes, which is sufficient to furnish up to six social housing apartments at any time.

Furniture requests are submitted directly to the banks by NGOs and municipal partners on behalf of their clients. The banks then coordinate with reuse centres to match these requests, manage inventory and organise distribution. Once the requested furniture has been prepared and supplied by the reuse centres, the furniture banks ensure that items are delivered free of charge to individuals receiving social services.



Overall, the federation’s activities resulted in 560 tonnes of items being diverted from landfill in 2024, equivalent to 250,000 individual items or CZK 2.1 million (approximately €85,000) in avoided waste disposal costs. Since their inception, the furniture banks have served nearly 6,000 individuals, including seniors, single parents and others facing social and economic hardship.

Reuse Federace’s members are able to scale their operations very quickly when necessary. For example, during the Ukrainian refugee crisis in 2022, the Southern Bohemian Furniture Bank scaled very quickly from supporting 60 people and providing 12.5 tonnes of furniture and equipment on average per month to 350 people and 61 tonnes of furniture and equipment during the months of the refugee crisis, all from a warehouse of 250m² (see Table 3). When emergency housing projects ended, the furniture was recollected and reintroduced into circulation.



© Reuse Federace

Table 3. Metrics relating to furniture reuse in the Furniture Bank of the South Bohemia region

| Indicator | Average / month in 2022 | Average / month from March to April 2022 corresponding to the time of the Ukrainian refugee crisis |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| No. of supported persons | 60 | 350 |
| Amount of furniture and other equipment issued / tonnes | 12.5 | 61 |
| Distance over which furniture and equipment were transported / km | 1200 | 2100 |
| Storage space of furniture and equipment / m ² | 250 | 250 |
| No. of customer organisations | 11 | 12 |
| No. of employees | 2 part-time | 4 part-time, 6 volunteers |

Reuse Federace’s reuse model provides opportunities for people who face barriers in the labour market. The reuse centres work with local employment services and offer jobs to those who struggle to find a job, such as people who are disabled or have experienced long-term unemployment. Thus, the federation not only reduces the quantity of waste generated and the need to use new resources, but also achieves different social objectives simultaneously.

Additionally, Reuse Federace has developed an innovative tool, Reuse Recognizer AI tool, which allows them to automatically classify products in their reuse centres and furniture banks, through simple photo uploads. This improves efficiency of record-keeping processes, while also enhancing data quality, consistency and accessibility. Apart from these benefits, this tool can potentially provide evidence-based contribution to the design of an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme and circular economy planning as it provides quantifiable environmental impact through items diverted from landfill and reintroduced into circulation.



CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Reuse Federace experiences difficulties in securing long-term funding, relying on a mix of public budgets and grants as well as membership fees. Despite this, the organisation has built an extensive and collaborative network of partners that enables efficient collection, circulation and redistribution of furniture, diverting items from landfill and supporting households in need. Strong impact evidence, established quality standards and shared resources further allow Reuse Federace to maintain credibility and support member organisations effectively.

CHALLENGES

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|--|---|
| Lack of long-term funding mechanism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuse Federace currently relies on funding from a mix of public budgets, regional support, ministry grants and NGO membership fees; they face difficulties in securing long-term public aid, unlike food banks, as there is a lack of public understanding of the “furniture bank” concept. |
|--|---|

SUCCESS FACTORS

| | |
|--|---|
| Extensive and collaborative network of partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuse Federace has built an extensive network of partnerships, creating a unique ecosystem for the collection, circulation and redistribution of furniture. This system not only diverts high-quality items from the landfill and supports households in need, but also demonstrates a sustainable and inclusive approach to public service delivery. |
| Strong evidence base for impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed data collection demonstrated clear social, environmental and economic value, strengthened Reuse Federace’s credibility with policymakers and attracted new partners. An innovative AI tool strengthened the evidence base by quantifying environmental benefits of reuse activities |
| Highly flexible reuse model | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scaling of operations during the Ukrainian refugee crisis demonstrated that Reuse Federace’s members can rapidly scale their activities when the situation demands. |
| Ensuring service quality and public trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuse Federace has introduced clear, consistent quality standards across the network to build public trust and ensure long-term partnerships with NGOs and municipal actors. They have also developed criteria, covering operational requirements and social and environmental considerations, to help support organisations considering starting their own furniture banks. |
| Shared resources and centralised services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuse Federace provides member organisations access to shared tools and support services, including marketing and fundraising materials, project management services and representation through the umbrella organisation, that reduce their administrative burden and enhance professionalisation. |

2.12. FORMACIÓ I TREBALL

| | |
|---|---|
| Social enterprise or network | Formació i Treball |
| Product stream | Furniture |
| Activity | Reuse, Repair & Refurbishment, Upcycling |
| Country | Spain |
| Year started | 1992 |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household or individual donations Donations from the hospitality sector National or local bulky waste collection programs Imperfect stock from mainstream businesses |
| Destination of product stream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributed directly to people in need Sold in shops |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises Mainstream businesses Public authorities |
| Funding sources | Financial subsidies from national and local public budgets |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 11–20 |

INTRODUCTION

Formació i Treball is a work integration social enterprise based in Barcelona. It was funded and initiated in 1992 by Caritas Barcelona but has since become independent and is one of the leading insertion companies in Spain. They have up to 800 workers involved in several professional activities, such as furniture recovery, but also food services, restaurants and catering, and textile recycling and facility services (e.g. cleaning, building, forestry management, laundry).

For over 30 years, Formació i Treball has been promoting Social Delivery Programmes in collaboration with social services from different private social organisations as well as city councils in Barcelona, city and metropolitan areas, with the aim of providing domestic furniture and clothes in a dignified way for families at risk of social exclusion.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

Since 2021, Formació i Treball has a social furniture recovery workshop, which was launched as part of a partnership with IKEA under the Verdaderos Hogares⁴⁸ project. Under this project, the workshop would create new furniture, such as cupboards, out of disparate furniture pieces donated from IKEA, before donating them to furnish the homes of people seeking social assistance. Frequently, these are homes that lack material resources, including temporary accommodations for individuals experiencing violence, eviction, or pest problems.



For B2B alliances to succeed, we have to be patient, to find win-win opportunities and to be clear about each other's expectations.

- Paula Veciana, Formació i Treball Director of Corporate Services, Strategy and Innovation



The workshop also collects furniture and mattresses from companies with imperfect stock, hotels, and businesses replacing their inventory. For example, they have established a long-term partnership with the hotel association in Barcelona⁴⁹ (Gremi d'hotels de Barcelona) to receive their outgoing furniture and mattresses. In addition, they partner with various city councils to provide pickup services for residents, while offering on-demand collection services to individual households in Barcelona. Typically, pickup services are paid by customers, even though large donations from private companies are collected free-of-charge, with the resulting sales offsetting the pickup costs. Recovered furniture and mattresses are then either donated to social delivery programmes or sold in their second-hand shops.

On average in a month, the furniture recovery workshop works with close to 9 tonnes of furniture, 6 tonnes of IKEA wood and over 1 tonne of mattresses.

These operational activities directly feed into Formació i Treball's contributions to the Social Delivery Programmes in the Catalan region. Under this collaboration, city councils provide local people in need with cheques⁵⁰ that can be used to purchase clothes, furniture and mattresses in Formació i Treball shops according to their needs.⁵¹ The cheque value is determined by the social situation and family size, and is issued as a QR code, aligning with Formació i Treball's mission to dignify social delivery. In 2024 alone, this project supported around 940 families and 2,800 people. Beyond serving people in need, Formació i Treball shops are open to the general public and offer delivery and assembly services, ensuring that the reuse system benefits people in vulnerable situations and the broader community.

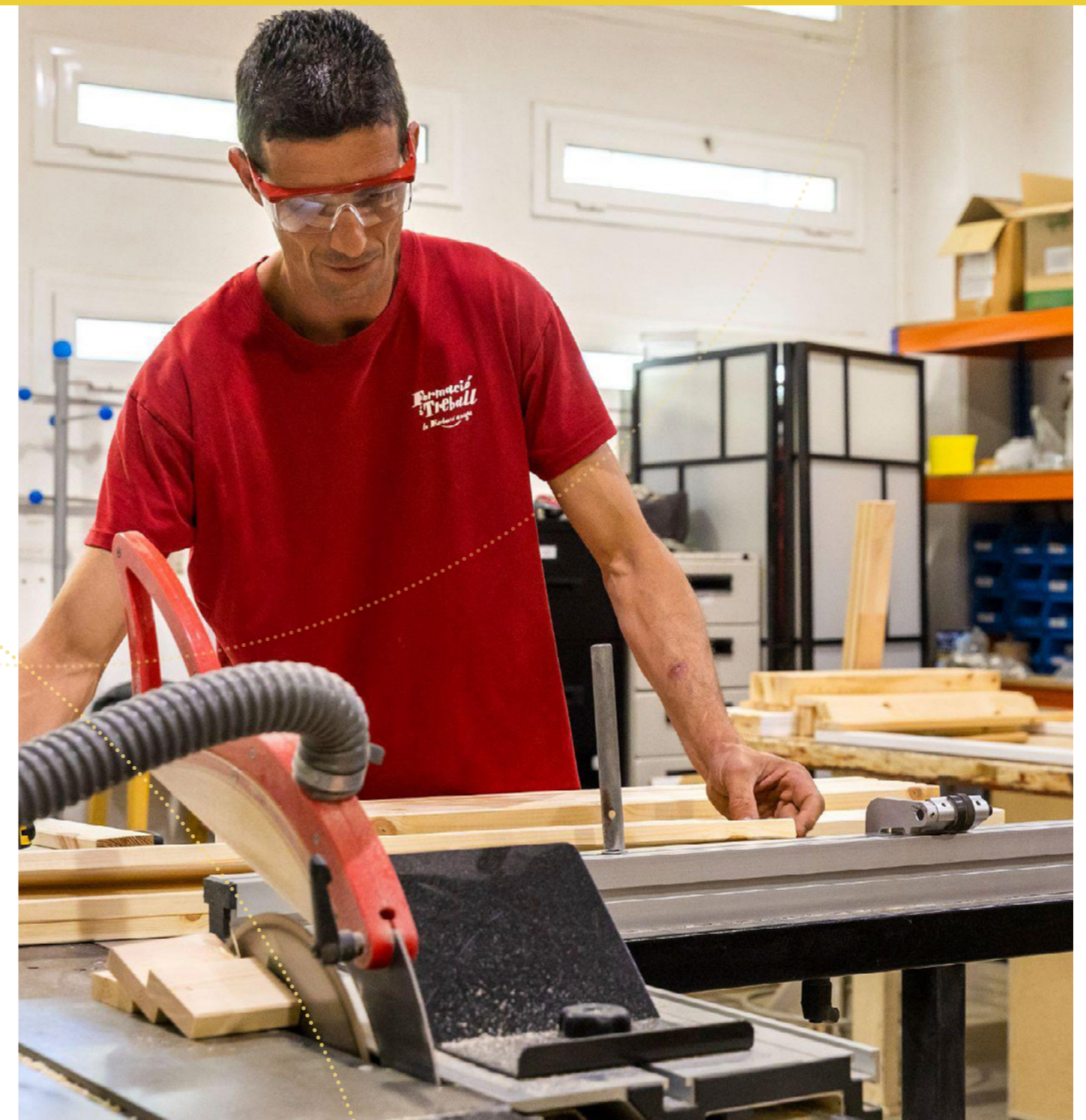


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Formació i Treball supports participants in their insertion programme through a structured pathway that begins with a personalised assessment and the development of an individual employment plan. Participants then receive targeted basic and professional training followed by supported, paid work experience in areas such as reuse, logistics, retail or catering.

As a result of the social furniture recovery workshop, 60% of the roles created are filled by insertion programme participants. They contribute to a range of activities essential to the project's success, including transport and logistics as well as furniture repair and reuse within the workshop.

In addition to acquiring practical work experience, participants benefit from dedicated staff support throughout this structured pathway, including job search assistance and follow-up, to ensure a successful transition and retention in the labour market. The social enterprise is supported by wage subsidies as part of their involvement in these insertion programmes.



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CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Formació i Treball sometimes receives furniture and mattresses that are broken, soiled, or otherwise unfit for reuse, increasing sorting time, labour demands and disposal costs. Nevertheless, recent warehouse expansions have increased storage capacity while a circular innovation project has enabled them to explore new ways to clean and improve recovery of bulky waste. Collaboration with local social services further enables their reuse activities to support broader social objectives and provide essential furnishings to people in vulnerable situations.

CHALLENGES

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|-------------------------------|--|
| Quality issues with donations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donated furniture and mattresses are sometimes broken, soiled, or otherwise unfit for reuse, increasing sorting time, labour intensity and disposal costs. |
|-------------------------------|--|

SUCCESS FACTORS

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| Expanded warehouse capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent changes to their warehouse building have allowed them to expand their storage space, increasing their capacity for recovery and reuse. |
| Circular innovation project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The workshop strives to look for innovation solutions for circularity to enhance their capacity to recover a greater extent of bulky waste and provide more jobs and resources for people in need (e.g. they participated in a pilot project with IKEA in 2025 that explored the feasibility of cleaning upholstered furniture such as sofas and carpets as well as mattresses). |
| Integration with social services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The collaboration with local social delivery programs enables reuse activities to support broader social objectives, providing essential furnishings and directly meeting the needs of people in vulnerable situations. |

2.13. DEAF ENTERPRISES

| | |
|---|---|
| Social enterprise or network | Deaf Enterprises |
| Product stream | Furniture |
| Activity | Repair & Refurbishment |
| Country | Ireland |
| Year started | 1987 |
| Source of products | Customers looking to repair their furniture |
| Destination of product stream | Returned to customers |
| Partnerships | Mainstream businesses |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants from national and local public budgets Financial subsidies from national and local public budgets Corporate sponsorships EU-funded project(s) Revenues from product and/or material resale |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 21–50 |

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1987, Deaf Enterprises is a social enterprise based in Cork, Ireland, with a core mission to provide meaningful employment and education opportunities for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Having been operational for almost four decades, the organisation is committed to achieving both social inclusion and circularity, particularly through their furniture reuse and bike repair services to consumers and businesses.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

Since 1988, Deaf Enterprises has operated a fully-equipped workshop offering furniture restoration, upholstery and French polishing services. With a team of trained personnel, the workshop specialises in restoring a variety of furniture pieces, ranging from antique items, Queen Anne chairs to full three-piece suites and armchairs. They also reupholster fabric furnishings in mobile homes brought to them and recover caravan and boat cushions. Each year, the workshop diverts over 2,000 pieces of furniture from landfill, significantly reducing environmental waste while extending the lifespan of valuable materials.

At the workshop, visitors are able to view ongoing and completed work to better understand the craftsmanship involved as well as choose from a curated selection of fabrics in various colours and designs for their furniture reupholstery. For larger furniture items, the social enterprise may send an estimator on-site to determine restoration feasibility before proceeding. Additionally, they offer collection and delivery services on designated weekdays within Cork.

While traditionally focused on private customers, Deaf Enterprises has, in recent years, ventured into B2B partnerships, particularly within the hospitality and education sectors. They partner with hotel groups and student accommodations in their refurbishing projects, scaling their impact while developing commercial viability of their circular practices. These successful partnerships bear testament to their quality standards and increase visibility of their work, drawing in more potential customers and businesses. In addition, Deaf Enterprises has consistently communicated the social and environmental benefits of their services, which has helped clients understand the broader impact of their choices.



© Deaf Enterprises

By integrating skilled craftsmanship with a commitment to empowering the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, Deaf Enterprises not only keeps resources in circulation, but also creates a model for inclusive, purpose-driven enterprises in the circular economy. This commitment has been recognised by the ReMark Quality Mark⁵² in 2023 by Community Resources Network Ireland, the network for community-based reuse, repair and recycling organisations in Ireland.

Since their inception, Deaf Enterprises has grown from a small team of around 20 to 40 employees today. Of these, over 30 are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and are employed across diverse roles such as upholsterers, machinists, and transport and delivery personnel. Training is tailored to the individual’s background. For example, upholstery trainees shadow qualified professionals for a period ranging from a few months to a year to learn the ropes, depending on their existing set of skills and knowledge. Communication within the team includes Irish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian sign languages, supported by an interpreter during official meetings and training sessions.

Deaf Enterprises are funded by the Community Service Programme, an initiative by the Irish government that provides fixed annual co-funding contributions to support the creation of sustainable employment opportunities for people distanced from the traditional labour market.



Here at Deaf Enterprises, we deal with people who may have slipped through the cracks and thus it is important that we have team members who are valued and who support each other.

Very often, it is tricky to scale up as it is a chicken-and-egg situation – we cannot expand unless we have the resources but at the same time, we cannot access funding resources unless we have the numbers to support.

- Claire O Mahony, Deaf Enterprises Employment Assistant Officer



CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Deaf Enterprises faces constraints including limited physical space, which restricts storage and operations, reliance on short-term project-based funding that hinders long-term investment, and difficulties securing affordable commercial building insurance. To navigate these challenges, Deaf Enterprises has developed strategic B2B collaborations and diversified their funding streams, including EU-funded projects and income from repair services. These approaches have strengthened their operations, increased their visibility and supported their continued employment of people from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

⚠️ CHALLENGES

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| Limited physical space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaf Enterprises are unable to store larger amounts of furniture and conduct more operations due to the size of their current premises, limiting both their output and ability to take on larger contracts. |
| Lack of core long-term funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaf Enterprises are primarily supported by short-term project-based funding which does not provide long-term stability required for investment in their premises, equipment and staffing required to scale their activities and meet growing demand for their services. |
| Difficulty in securing affordable commercial building insurance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance companies often view Deaf Enterprise’s activities as high-risk due to the use of machinery and the nature of their premises, making it challenging to find comprehensive coverage at a reasonable cost. This barrier limits their operations, delays expansion and increases financial vulnerability. |

🏆 SUCCESS FACTORS

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| Adaptive organisational model | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a registered charity and the largest dedicated employer of the Deaf community in Ireland, Deaf Enterprises benefits from a dual identity that enables them to remain flexible and adapt to emerging funding opportunities. |
| Strategic B2B collaborations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaf Enterprises have expanded into B2B partnerships where they provide refurbished furniture for hotel groups and student accommodations, strengthening their operations, enhancing their visibility and attracting potential partners. |
| Diversified funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaf Enterprises participates in funded projects (e.g. EU-funded projects, a pilot project to refurbish donated bikes and either resell or offer them to people who normally do not have access to bikes), and generate revenues from their repair services, providing different sources of income to sustain their operations. |

2.14. BOUNCE BACK RECYCLING



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| Social enterprise or network | Bounce Back Recycling |
| Product stream | Mattresses |
| Activity | Recycling |
| Country | Ireland |
| Year started | 2017 |
| Source of products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (household) and commercial mattress collection services |
| Destination of product stream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sent for internal recycling Material redistribution for repurposing / reuse |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises Mainstream businesses Public authorities |
| Funding sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial subsidies from national and local public budgets Funding from private organisations / private foundations Revenues from product and/or material resale |
| No. of work integration employees involved in furniture and mattress activities | 21–50 |

INTRODUCTION

Mattresses disposed of in a landfill take a long time to decompose. While the soft materials may begin to decompose after 15 years, components such as steel springs can persist for over 50 years and polyurethane foam (PU) can take up to 100 years to fully degrade.⁵³ This long decomposition process underscores the environmental importance of effective mattress recycling.

In response to this challenge, Bounce Back Recycling, a social enterprise established in 2017 by the Galway Traveller Movement, works to divert mattresses from landfill while providing employment opportunities for members of the Irish Traveller community. Although based in Galway, Bounce Back Recycling provides commercial recycling services in other areas across Ireland. Since their inception, they have processed over 200,000 mattresses, expanding their operations from a modest 280 m² facility to a larger 930 m² site.

The mattress recycling sector in Ireland has already seen the closure of two other social enterprises due to bankruptcy, leaving Bounce Back Recycling as the only remaining dedicated social enterprise recycler.

CIRCULARITY AND INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

Bounce Back Recycling offers paid mattress collection services across 13 counties, alongside a dedicated drop-off facility in Galway for retailers, households, businesses, and local authorities. Revenue generated through these services directly supports staff wages, covers operational overheads and underpins the long-term sustainability of the enterprise.

Bounce Back Recycling has a partnership with Harvey Norman, one of Ireland’s largest mattress retailers, in which they retrieve old mattresses from Harvey Norman customers who are purchasing new ones. The social enterprise provides on-site containers for temporary storage prior to their collection. According to a representative from the social enterprise, they have recycled thousands of old mattresses and bed bases from Harvey Norman stores across Ireland.

At Bounce Back Recycling’s Galway facility, a custom-built processing machine handles around 1,000 mattresses per week, diverting substantial volumes of bulky waste from landfill. Their employees are trained to disassemble mattresses by hand, ensuring a higher material recovery rate and better material quality than mechanical recycling can achieve. Recovered materials are sorted and repurposed to give a second life to nearly all of the materials. For instance, foam is cleaned and shredded for use in home insulation products while steel springs are recycled as metal scrap used in production.

Amongst other mattress types, they recycle pocket mattresses, which are notoriously difficult to recycle as each spring needs to be separated from the fabric pocket it is encased in. This labour-intensive process can take up to two hours per mattress, thus underscoring the social and environmental commitment involved in this activity.

Collaboration is central to Bounce Back Recycling’s success. In addition to Harvey Norman and the hospitality sector, the organisation works with Galway Metal, which receives their metal scrap for reprocessing, and with social enterprises such as RecycleIT, which conduct collection services on their behalf following a successful trial in Dublin. In addition, Bounce Back Recycling engages in public awareness campaigns, partnering with local and national media to promote responsible mattress use and recycling habits among consumers.

Bounce Back Recycling also operates a sister social enterprise, Bounce Back Upcycling, which employs women from the Traveller Community to refurbish and resell donated furniture.⁵⁴ Located beside Bounce Back Recycling, the upcycling team often incorporates materials recovered from deconstructed mattresses into their furniture pieces, creating a circular flow of resources that strengthens the work of both enterprises.

Beyond their environmental impact, Bounce Back Recycling promotes inclusive employment through the Community Services Programme (CSP), which financially supports social enterprises by subsidising wages for employees who face difficulties gaining mainstream employment.



© Bounce Back Recycling



© Bounce Back Recycling

From just three employees in 2017, the organisation has grown to employ 23 members of the Traveller community, a group that has historically faced significant barriers to employment and social inclusion. These roles provide meaningful stable work that reflects and builds upon the Traveller community’s long-standing tradition of recycling and repurposing. Profits are then reinvested in community initiatives, such as funding a university diploma course through which Traveller participants have graduated with qualifications in community work.

Bounce Back Recycling’s innovative social and environmental work has earned national recognition, including support from Rethink Ireland’s Social Enterprise Development Fund and membership from their Innovators Circle,⁵⁵ a philanthropy membership circle for forward-thinking individuals and companies dedicated to supporting social innovation in Ireland. The social enterprise is also supported by Community Foundation Ireland, a donor-advised fund that supports other social and circular work in Ireland, including the national network Community Resources Network Ireland.

Looking ahead, Bounce Back Recycling aims to expand their services nationwide, employing more members of the Traveller community and establishing a social investment fund to support social initiatives through the Galway Traveller Movement in areas such as education, culture and health.



The hope is, in the next three years, regardless of where you are in the country, that you’ll be able to book a collection from Bounce Back Recycling right from your front door.

- Martin Ward, Bounce Back Recycling Manager⁵⁶



CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Bounce Back Recycling encounters considerable constraints, including the absence of adequate financial compensation for their work and limited access to discarded mattresses. These challenges are particularly acute in a sector where other social enterprises have closed. Nevertheless, the organisation builds on a strong social mission supporting the Traveller community and leverages strategic partnerships to strengthen operations, streamline logistics and enhance recycling outcomes, all the more significant given its critical role as the only remaining social enterprise mattress recycler in Ireland.

⚠️ CHALLENGES

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|---|---|
| <p>Lack of financial compensation mechanisms</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite its proven environmental and social benefits, Bounce Back Recycling receives no direct financial compensation for diverting thousands of tonnes of bulky waste from landfill. • The mattress recycling sector in Ireland has already seen the closure of two other social enterprises due to bankruptcy, leaving Bounce Back Recycling as the only remaining dedicated social enterprise recycler. |
| <p>Limited access to discarded mattresses</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to many civic amenity sites, which are now largely privatised, remains restricted, limiting the number of mattresses Bounce Back Recycling can recover. • While partnerships with mattress retailers are vital for their operations by providing them access to unwanted mattresses, retail participation remains voluntary. |

🏆 SUCCESS FACTORS

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Strong social mission for the Traveller community</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having dedicated employment support through the work Bounce Back recycling does is vital for members of the Traveller community, who have been denied opportunity from mainstream employment, enabling them to gain practical skills through work experience and supporting their transition towards long-term employment elsewhere. • The mattress operations build on the Traveller community’s long-standing tradition of recycling and repurposing, strengthening their sense of ownership and core purpose. In doing so, the initiative reclaims the community’s role as Ireland’s original recyclers. |
| <p>Strategic partnerships to support operations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bounce Back Recycling established partnerships to streamline logistics and recycling processes, and leverage the expertise of specialised partners (e.g. they work closely with a metal company to reprocess their metal scrap and collaborate with a social enterprise to handle their collection services). |

3. OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGES, SUCCESS FACTORS & OPPORTUNITIES

The case studies presented in this report highlight both the diversity of approaches and the shared realities experienced by social enterprises working in furniture and mattress circularity. Drawing on these insights, the following section outlines the key cross-cutting challenges, success factors and opportunities that shape the sector.

3.1. CHALLENGES

Circular initiatives involving furniture and mattress reuse face several operational, financial and social challenges. For instance, ensuring health and safety in reuse and recycling operations is critical, particularly for mattresses and upholstered items, and requires strict hygiene protocols, quality controls and sometimes chemical treatment to prevent contamination and protect staff members. Beyond these safety requirements, social enterprises commonly encounter constraints that place a bottleneck on improving and expanding their operations, from limited physical space to inadequate funding and issues with relevant partnerships.

LIMITED PHYSICAL SPACE

A key challenge faced by social enterprises working with furniture and mattresses is limited physical space. Given the bulky nature of these product streams, it is difficult to maintain or scale activities when there is limited warehouse capacity or insufficient retail space to display items for sale. In many cases, these social enterprises, including those within national networks such as Re-Use Austria, also manage additional product streams that are easier to sell and require less storage space, such as household items, clothing and books. Thus, they have to balance the available storage and display areas in a way that ensures their operations remain operationally and economically sustainable. For instance, Oxfam België/Belgique's IMPACT Furniture have had to turn down donation offers due to limited warehouse capacity.

INADEQUATE AND PRECARIOUS FUNDING

The widespread lack of adequate funding affects social enterprises' long-term financial stability. Many social enterprises, including Center Ponovne Uporabe and Deaf Enterprises, have sustained their operations over the years by navigating from one short-term project grant to the next. Such grants cover day-to-day activities but leave little room for long-term development. In contrast, core or structural funding, such as longer-term operating grants or national funding schemes, can provide more flexible and reliable support that enables strategic planning, capacity-building and sustainable investment. Across the sector, social enterprises' operations are further shaped, and in many cases made possible, by reliance on national labour activation schemes. Without these schemes, many of these organisations would simply not be able to exist.

In addition, even when circular collaborations with private companies or public institutions function well and generate clear environmental and social value, they often remain financially fragile. In some cases, promising partnerships

have ended due to the bankruptcy of key actors or the absence of structural financial support, not because of a lack of interest. In the case of Bounce Back Recycling in Ireland, which processes thousands of mattresses and employs members of the Traveller community, there is no direct compensation for the environmental service of diverting bulky waste from landfill, illustrating how even high-impact social enterprises operate under precarious funding conditions.

As a result, social enterprises are rarely able to invest in improvements that could strengthen or expand their business models, such as staff training, infrastructure upgrades and adoption of new technologies, all of which are important for remaining competitive and relevant within the circular economy.

SKILL GAPS

Social enterprises also face significant skill gaps that limit their ability to scale and enhance circular activities. Furniture repair, refurbishment and upcycling often require specialised artisanal skills, such as carpentry, upholstery and restoration, that are not easily acquired through short-term training programmes. As a result, these activities tend to rely on a small number of experienced staff, creating bottlenecks and limiting the volume of items that can be processed.

This challenge is particularly pronounced for social enterprises whose mission is to support individuals into long-term employment, often through relatively short training or work integration placements. Meanwhile, developing advanced repair and restoration skills typically requires sustained long-term training. This creates a tension between social objectives and the operational need for highly skilled craftsmanship. Consequently, social enterprises may be forced to prioritise simpler resale models over higher-value refurbishment activities.

CAPACITY GAPS

Capacity constraints extend beyond skills. Limited storage, logistics infrastructure and small teams restrict the ability to accept large donations or take on additional projects. Workforce limitations can also affect operations, as health-related constraints among employees may restrict their ability to safely handle heavy furniture, particularly in social enterprises that employ individuals with additional support needs. In addition, the discontinuation of repair or upcycling workshops due to a lack of long-term funding affects the ability to deliver multidisciplinary projects. For instance, the Plan B sewing workshop in Finland, which had previously contributed to the Lippulaiva library project, is no longer active in the absence of sustained or new funding.

In parallel, digital capability gaps further restrict competitiveness. To compete effectively with private sector actors, social enterprises would ideally digitalise their business models, for example by implementing digital tools for inventory and supply chain management or establishing e-commerce sales. Yet, limited financial resources and staff capacity often prevent meaningful investment in digital infrastructure.

Addressing both skills and capacity gaps is therefore critical to strengthening the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of social enterprises operating within the circular economy.

LOW QUALITY OF DONATED PRODUCTS

Social enterprises face a decline in the quality of donated items. This trend is driven by increased mainstream competition from ubiquitous second-hand platforms as well as the growing availability of cheap, lower-quality furniture. This results in additional labour costs for transport and disposal when these items are not suitable for reuse, adding operational costs and reducing overall efficiency.

PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES

Social enterprises often function as small and medium-sized organisations with limited financial and human resources. Their circular and socially driven business model prioritises impact and reintegration, in contrast with the profit-driven nature of mainstream companies. This structural imbalance, the misalignment of priorities and lack of awareness of social circular enterprises' specificity within mainstream companies make it difficult for social enterprises to secure fair and sustainable collaborations. As a result, some increasingly turn to public procurement, where tenders may include social and circular criteria, leaving significant potential in B2B partnerships underexplored.

Yet, recent research illustrates that accessing public procurement opportunities is also challenging.⁵⁷ The reliance on the lowest price offered and the lack of social and green considerations systematically disadvantages social enterprises. Current possibilities to reserve contracts for actors hiring a minimum threshold of underrepresented groups under EU law are underutilised. Furthermore, contracting authorities lack familiarity with the social economy. Lengthy processes, high minimum turnover thresholds and excessive data demands (often due to unfamiliarity with social enterprise models, especially in the reuse sector) can further reinforce a vicious cycle of exclusion for social enterprises.

For deeper insights and recommendations to improve social enterprises' access to public procurement, you may refer to our report "Advancing Climate, Environmental and Social Goals through Public Procurement".⁵⁸

3.2. SUCCESS FACTORS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Successful circular activities in furniture and mattresses rely on several operational, social and economic conditions that not only enable day-to-day functioning but also create opportunities for growth and long-term resilience. These social enterprises require staff with driving licences and the physical ability to handle heavy goods, as well as adequate logistics, storage and retail space, and financial support, as managing bulky waste entails higher costs than other product streams.

STRONG SOCIAL AND CIRCULAR MISSION

Across the featured case studies, a strong social and circular mission underpins the success of these organisations by shaping their practices and partnerships, while creating opportunities for innovation, workforce development and long-term financial resilience.

These organisations engaged in circular practices operate as social enterprises, placing their social mission at the heart of all their activities. This mission guides decision-making, fosters sustainable and innovative business practices, and enables consumers to participate in furniture and mattress circularity, strengthening both credibility and consumer engagement.

At the same time, these activities are labour-intensive and often depend on labour activation schemes to remain financially viable. This creates meaningful entry points for individuals facing barriers in the labour market, supporting their progression towards long-term employment.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Circular activities create opportunities for skills development, particularly in reuse and repair, which are increasingly essential in shifting away from a linear economy. In turn, strengthening these skills is a key success factor for improving both the quality and scalability of circular practices.

Through workforce transition and B2B collaborations, competencies acquired or strengthened within social circular enterprises can transfer to the broader labour market, embedding circular skills within the traditional economy and reinforcing their economic value. Over time, the growing recognition of these skills can create opportunities for increased demand, new collaborations and additional revenue streams. Together, these factors generate a dual benefit: recovery, repair and resale reduce waste and resource consumption while also facilitating workforce (re) integration.

DIVERSE COLLABORATIONS

Building strategic collaborations with mainstream companies, public authorities and community organisations has proven most valuable in furniture and mattress reuse and recycling. These partnerships have brought about various benefits, such as steady material flows, access to resources, and specialised infrastructure for cleaning, dismantling or recycling. For example, partnering with Recyc-Matelas Europe has allowed Envie 2E Lorraine in France to develop specialised expertise, set up dedicated infrastructure and create an outlet for dismantled mattress materials, ensuring they return to the manufacturing sector while generating revenue. Collaborations also facilitate coordinated delivery of second-hand furniture and mattresses to those in need, as demonstrated by the federation of furniture banks and reuse centres in the Czech Republic.

Such collaborations have also created further opportunities by increasing social circular initiatives' visibility and credibility, attracting new partnerships and creating new revenue streams. For example, the Kitchen Rescue programme in Ireland was featured by the national television and radio broadcaster in a series highlighting inspiring circular economy initiatives. This exposure increased public awareness of the programme's work and led to a noticeable rise in kitchen donations.

Such partnerships have also ensured an outlet for second-hand furniture and mattresses, such as when they are returned to offices and public spaces in an upcycled form or their dismantled parts sent for recycling. For example, Stúdio Emmaüs in France collaborates with corporate and public partners to transform discarded materials into new products and interior solutions, from upcycled cushions to refurbished public spaces. This diversification has strengthened the resilience of circular business models.

For deeper insights and recommendations for successful social enterprise and private sector partnerships, you may refer to our report "Buying Social and Circular: Final Project Report & 18 Case Studies on Social Enterprise and Private Sector Partnerships".⁵⁹

ENABLING POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Supportive policy frameworks, such as national Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes for furniture and mattresses, play a pivotal role in enabling and expanding reuse, repair, and recycling activities. For instance, the EPR scheme in France provides social enterprises with access to a steady supply of mattresses, financial compensation for their work and a formal partnership with a state-appointed eco-organisation.

Similarly, increasing regulatory requirements for companies to report on social and environmental impacts have created new opportunities for social enterprises such as Insieme Cooperativa Sociale in Italy. These social enterprises have benefited from mainstream companies' growing interest in collaborations, wherein the companies pay social enterprises to handle waste streams and prepare reporting data. This, in turn, helps companies improve their sustainability performance.

RREUSE's key EU-level policy recommendations are presented in the publication "For a Job-Rich and Inclusive Circular Economy: A Social and Circular Policy Outlook 2024-2029".⁶⁰

INVESTMENT IN INTERNAL OPERATIONS

Internal operations are a critical factor shaping the effectiveness and scalability of social enterprises engaged in furniture and mattress reuse. This encompasses everything from collection, transport and storage to repair, refurbishment and resale, and it directly influences a social enterprise's ability to deliver both environmental and social impact.

Organisational size can be an advantage in this context: social enterprises with larger teams or more extensive infrastructure often have greater capacity to manage higher donation volumes, diversify product streams and maintain consistent quality. However, even smaller social enterprises can achieve scalability through strategic investments in workforce development, process optimisation and infrastructure. For instance, social enterprises that have invested in staff training and a larger team, particularly in customer service, marketing and communications, have experienced notable increases in sales and turnover alongside enhanced customer satisfaction.

Capacity development initiatives can address operational gaps by equipping teams with practical skills and knowledge, and problem-solving strategies. This enables social enterprises to professionalise their circular activities, improve efficiency and scale sustainably. Such initiatives can also include partially or fully funded pilot projects to test innovative collection, refurbishment or recovery models to increase material and product recovery rates while reducing risk. For example, Formació i Treball in Spain implemented a pilot project exploring the refurbishment of upholstered furniture, with the aim of enhancing their capacity to recover bulky waste, and generate jobs and resources for people in need.

INNOVATIVE AND CUSTOMISED APPROACHES

Innovation is another key success factor for social enterprises tackling bulky waste. By integrating holistic and collaborative strategies from design to manufacturing, social enterprises maximise material recovery while minimising their ecological footprint.

For instance, in France, Stúdio Emmaüs collaborates with key actors, such as architects and reuse-focused companies, to upcycle diverse furniture and textile items at scale, producing consistent, high-quality batches from large donations. By involving staff, including integration workers, from the design phase, the studio fosters ownership and commitment while minimising environmental impact. In Belgium, IMPACT Furniture worked with an eco-design agency of an established designer to develop a catalogue of six furniture objects created from donated office furniture. In Italy, Insieme Cooperativa Sociale has been implementing a product-as-a-service model, whereby they lease furniture for events. Meanwhile, Reuse Federace in the Czech Republic has implemented an AI-powered digital solution to automate item classification using photo uploads.

Furthermore, advanced and thoughtfully designed processing methods, ranging from ergonomically optimised workstations and stringent safety protocols at Envie 2E Lorraine to custom-built machines and meticulous hand disassembly at Bounce Back Recycling, ensure high-quality material recovery, even from complex items like pocket mattresses.

These innovations demonstrate that combining human-centric design, technical improvements and sustainable processes not only diverts large volumes of waste from landfills but also reinforces the social mission of these enterprises.

LEAN AND FLEXIBLE OPERATIONS

Another key success factor for social enterprises has been the implementation of lean and adaptable operational models that keep overhead costs low while safeguarding financial sustainability. Some social enterprises operate with a compact core team per shop, complemented by a team of volunteers and access to a van for collecting and transporting donated furniture and mattresses. As turnover increases in larger retail spaces, staffing and volunteer capacity scale accordingly, ensuring operational efficiency.

Flexibility in stock management can further strengthen financial viability. Some social enterprises have prioritised accepting a broad range of items in good condition and selling them quickly in large volumes to maintain a steady cash flow. This high-turnover approach supports day-to-day operations while minimising storage pressures and refurbishment costs. Digital engagement also plays an increasingly important role. For instance, Habitat ReStore in Ireland has leveraged social media platforms to promote newly arrived items, highlight unique pieces or advertise price reductions. This has helped boost footfall and sales performance at minimal marketing expense.

As logistics and transport costs, particularly for bulky items, represent a major expense, effective screening processes are critical. Requesting photographs of donated goods or conducting site visits before collection has helped social enterprises assess quality and avoid unnecessary transport costs.

Together, these practices enable social enterprises to cover the costs of collection, storage and resale. By combining lean staffing and flexible stock management, they can operate sustainably within the circular economy. However, their long-term viability also depends on other factors, such as access to core funding, strong partnerships with public or corporate actors and supportive regulatory frameworks.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Furniture and mattresses represent one of the most logistically complex and under-optimised bulky waste streams. Their size, weight and composite structures have historically made reuse and recycling difficult, often resulting in disposal through landfill or incineration. Yet under the right conditions, these products are a valuable reservoir of essential household goods and recoverable materials. Unlocking their circular potential offers significant environmental gains, economic value and social impact.

Social enterprises have long been active in furniture and mattress circularity and are widely recognised as pioneers of practical circular economy models. Rooted in their mission of social inclusion, local job creation and community service, they play a critical role in ensuring that the transition to a low-carbon circular economy is also a just one. By extending product or material lifespans and diverting tonnes of bulky waste from disposal, they simultaneously create meaningful work and training opportunities for people facing barriers in the labour market. These pathways not only support individuals into longer-term employment, but also reintroduce circular skills within the local economy, delivering lasting benefits to the individuals as well as their communities.

Despite their impact, many social enterprises operate below their potential. Persistent challenges, including limited physical space, skills shortage, capacity gaps and the absence of stable, long-term funding, constrain their ability to scale. Compared to more established circular streams such as textiles or electronic waste, furniture and mattress circularity often remains small-scale. Bottlenecks in workforce development, infrastructure investment, and access to high-quality donations restrict growth, and in some cases, promising initiatives have been discontinued due to insufficient structural funding rather than a real lack of demand.

Nevertheless, these obstacles are not insurmountable. They point to clear opportunities for systemic support and strategic collaboration.

Case studies presented in this report clearly demonstrate that partnerships play a critical role in enhancing organisational resilience and long-term scalability. More and stronger partnerships with public authorities, municipal waste management centres, peer social enterprises and mainstream companies can unlock access to funding, infrastructure, donation flows and new consumer markets.

In addition, capacity-development and pilot initiatives can enable organisations to experiment with or scale innovative approaches to improving recovery rates and extending product lifecycles within a relatively low-risk environment. By strengthening capabilities and fostering learning, these efforts can enhance existing circular initiatives while accelerating their effective scaling for broader, long-term impact.

At the same time, increasing public awareness is vital to stimulating demand and embedding circular practices, such as reuse, repair and second-hand purchasing, into everyday consumption patterns. Mainstreaming these practices within the broader economy, including corporate purchasing and public procurement, is essential to achieving lasting systemic change.

Social enterprises are indispensable actors in advancing bulky waste circularity. With targeted investment, consumer awareness, enabling policy frameworks and collaborative ecosystems, they can move from operating at the margins of waste management systems to becoming central pillars of an inclusive circular economy.



5. ENDNOTES

- 1 This table is based on the RREUSE network map and reflects information submitted or reviewed by members. It may not represent the most up-to-date status of all locations.
- 2 European Environment Bureau (2017) Circular economy opportunities in the furniture sector. (Available [here](#)).
- 3 European Remanufacturing Network (2015) Remanufacturing Market Study. (Available [here](#)).
- 4 EPR Club (2021) Session on EPR for Mattresses. (Available [here](#)).
- 5 European Commission (2025). Living conditions in Europe – poverty and social exclusion. (Available [here](#)).
- 6 European Commission (2025). Living conditions in Europe – material deprivation and economic strain. (Available [here](#)).
- 7 Across the network, ReStore employs more than 30 staff and 16 JobStart Trainees (Northern Ireland) and approximately 4 colleagues supported by the Irish Government labour-activation scheme (Republic of Ireland). Every month, volunteers invest more than 4,500 hours supporting the ReStore mission.
- 8 Ireland Kitchen Furniture Industry Outlook 2022-2026.
- 9 Ville de Paris (2025) La nouvelle médiathèque Virginia-Woolf ouvre dans le 13^e arrondissement. (Available [here](#)).
- 10 Among other projects, Re-Use Austria carries out an annual market survey (“Markterhebung”) to analyse and make visible the development of reuse activities in Austria on behalf of the public authorities.
- 11 Mattress cleaning operations started in 2025.
- 12 Funded by the Scottish Government, the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) fund offers small sums of funding to enable visits which build mutual support across the community sector through peer-to-peer learning in Scotland.
- 13 Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company (2024) NAC mattress reuse project strikes gold. (Available [here](#)).
- 14 Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company (2024) NAC mattress reuse project strikes gold. (Available [here](#)).
- 15 Zero Waste Scotland (2024) Business support polishes new life into pre-loved furniture. (Available [here](#)).
- 16 Aberdeenshire Council (2025) Bag it up: your old mattress can make a difference. (Available [here](#)).
- 17 Aberdeenshire Council (2025) Bag it up: your old mattress can make a difference. (Available [here](#)).
- 18 The IMPACT Furniture business name was established in 2020 but their operations and expertise in office furniture date back to 2001.
- 19 In cases where the components cannot be reused, IMPACT Furniture will send them for recycling.
- 20 Het Goed (n.d.) Onze lokale partners & samenwerking - Boxtel. (Available [here](#)).
- 21 Het Goed (n.d.) Spullen brengen. (Available [here](#)).
- 22 Het Goed (n.d.) Ophaalservice. (Available [here](#)).
- 23 Het Goed (n.d.) Inboedelservice. (Available [here](#)).
- 24 IKEA (2021) IKEA introduceert samen met lokale kunstenaars de ‘Circular Hub’. (Available [here](#)).
- 25 Het Goed (n.d.) Werkwarenhuis. (Available [here](#)).
- 26 Het Goed (n.d.) De Werkversneller: werkt gelijk. (Available [here](#)).
- 27 Het Goed (2023) Het Goed ontvangt PSO 30-certificering. (Available [here](#)).
- 28 This occasionally includes the hospitality sector.
- 29 European Commission (n.d.) Waste Framework Directive. (Available [here](#)).
- 30 Spolini, N (2022) Matteo Ward x Ludovico Crisi: un matrimonio bucolico nel bosco della Villa Valmarana ai Nani. Vogue Italia. (Available [here](#)).
- 31 Established as a result of a European Life+ project PRISCA which concluded in 2016, this plant handles waste and preparation for reuse. Managing around 200 tonnes of waste material per year, this smart and flexible warehouse adapts to the seasonality of waste or goods with five different layouts. The spaces and loading units of each layout version are designed based on the quantity, volume and different types of material.
- 32 Persson, O. & Hinton, J. B. (2023) Second-hand clothing markets and a just circular economy? Exploring the role of business forms and profit. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 390, Article 136139. (Available [here](#)).
- 33 Apart from the recycling of materials in mattresses, Envie also carries out the recycling of materials from electrical and electronic equipment waste, manufacturing and technical gardening tools, reconditioning of household appliances and reconditioning of medical devices.
- 34 Impact France (2022) Ecomatelas : la prochaine licorne à impact qui circularise la filière du matelas. (Available [here](#)).
- 35 EUROPUR (2025) Recycling initiatives for mattresses in Europe: EPR schemes and national approaches in the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. (Available [here](#)).
- 36 Producers include manufacturers, distributors or importers
- 37 EUROPUR (2025) Recycling initiatives for mattresses in Europe: EPR schemes and national approaches in the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. (Available [here](#)).
- 38 Ecomaison (n.d.) Nos filières. (Available [here](#)).
- 39 There are 25 employees, 21 of whom are in integration on a two-year contract and four who are permanent employees (two team leaders, one maintenance manager and one activity manager).
- 40 Envie (2022) Envie innove #4 – Le traitement et le recyclage des matelas à Envie Lorraine. (Available [here](#)).
- 41 Le Journal des Entreprises (2020) En recyclant des matelas, Envie 2E Lorraine crée des emplois. (Available [here](#)).
- 42 City of Espoo (2022) Lippulaiva library in Espoo is opening March 31st, 2022. (Available [here](#)).
- 43 City of Espoo (2022) Lippulaiva library in Espoo is opening March 31st, 2022. (Available [here](#)).
- 44 Lippulaiva (n.d.) Kirjasto Lippulaiva. (Available [here](#)).
- 45 City of Espoo (2024) The Espoo Info space at Lippulaiva will become a silent space of the library. (Available [here](#)).
- 46 City of Espoo (2022) Lippulaiva library in Espoo is opening March 31st, 2022. (Available [here](#)).
- 47 This represents only a minor source of income for Reuse Federace.
- 48 True homes in English
- 49 <https://barcelonahotels.org/>
- 50 Formació i Treball (2020) Formació i Treball pone a disposició de las entidades cheques sociales para canjear por ropa en Botiga Amiga. (Available [here](#)).
- 51 Formació i Treball (n.d.) Som allò que aconseguim superar. (Available [here](#)).
- 52 See <https://crni.ie/re-mark/>
- 53 Bounce Back Recycling (2025) Why it’s so important to recycle mattress. (Available [here](#)).
- 54 Capplis, C. (2024) ‘We’re the original recyclers on the island’. *The Irish Times*. (Available [here](#)).
- 55 Rethink Ireland (n.d.) Social Enterprise Growth Fund 2021 - 2024. (Available [here](#)).
- 56 Capplis, C. (2024) ‘We’re the original recyclers on the island’. *The Irish Times*. (Available [here](#)).
- 57 RREUSE (2024) Advancing Climate, Environmental and Social Goals Through Public Procurement. (Available [here](#)).
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- 59 RREUSE (2024) Buying Social and Circular: Final Project Report & 18 Case Studies on Social Enterprise and Private Sector Partnerships. (Available [here](#)).
- 60 RREUSE (2024) For a Job-Rich and Inclusive Circular Economy: A Social and Circular Policy Outlook 2024-2029. (Available [here](#)).

