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SCALE UP CYCLING

PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR UPCYCLING COMMUNITY PRACTICES IN EVERYDAY LIFE

PR3: Community building through upcycling training modules

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INTRODUCTION

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



This module is intended as a practical tool for providing creative upcycling ideas. We hope the following examples will inspire you to initiate and implement your own upcycling projects at home, at school, in businesses or in art. In addition, we strongly believe that after this module you will be able to influence and even change other people's behavior and attitudes towards more upcycling ideas in our everyday lives at home, at school or at work.

Let's start!

1. UPCYCLING AT HOME

Why should we upcycle at home?

Upcycling at home offers a multitude of benefits, making it a sustainable and environmentally friendly practice that aligns with the principles of the circular economy. It encourages creativity and innovation by challenging individuals to think outside the box. It fosters a mind-set of reimagining and transforming existing items into something new and useful, promoting a DIY (Do It Yourself) culture.

Furthermore, engaging in upcycling projects provides a sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction. Transforming old or discarded items into something functional or aesthetically pleasing can be a rewarding experience, fostering a deeper connection with one's belongings. Last but not least, upcycling initiatives often involve family and community collaboration. Whether it's participating in family activities, in local workshops or sharing ideas online, upcycling can bring people together, fostering a sense of community and collective responsibility for sustainable living.

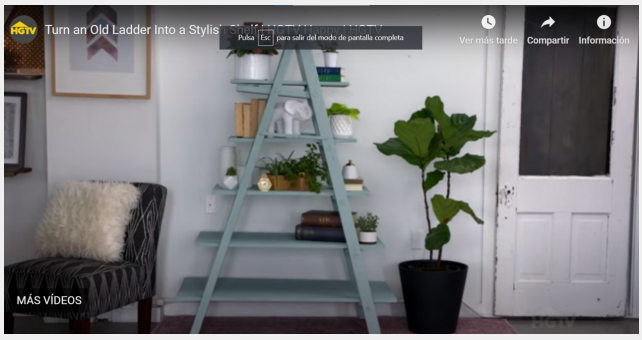
Examples of upcycling activities we can do at home:

Upcycled items are often unique and personalized, reflecting the creator's style and preferences. This promotes individuality and a departure from mass-produced products. There are numerous creative and practical upcycling activities we can undertake at home. Here are a few examples to get us started:

Repurposed Furniture:

- Transform an old wooden ladder into a bookshelf

Watch the video



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DIY Planters:

- Use old tin cans, mason jars, or wooden crates as plant containers.
- Turn an old teapot or kettle into a flower pot.
- Repurpose worn-out boots or shoes as small whimsical planters.

Clothing and Textile Upcycling:

- Create new clothes from old ones by sewing or combining different items.
- Turn worn-out jeans into stylish denim shorts or a trendy bag.
- Transform a vintage scarf into a unique pillowcase



Source: Pinterest



Source: Facilísimo

Jewellery and Accessories:

- Use broken or mismatched jewellery to craft new pieces.
- Create a statement necklace from repurposed fabric.

Watch the video

Home Decor:

- Use old suitcase handles for your newly painted wooden chest.
- Turn an old trunk into a comfortable stool.
- Use your old bicycle to support your bathroom sink.
- Turn your old bathtub into an armchair
- Use your old suitcase as a cat bed
- To make your cat bed, follow the instructions.



Source: Pinterest



Kitchen Upcycling:

- Use wine bottles as water or oil dispensers.
- Turn old wooden crates into a kitchen shelf or spice rack.

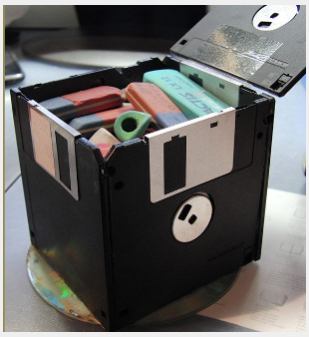
Electronic Devices:

- Turn an old computer monitor into a unique fish tank

Source: Pinterest







Desk Organizers

- Stack diskettes vertically or horizontally and secure them with glue. Create compartments for pens, pencils, and other desk accessories. Customize with paint or decorations to enhance aesthetics.

Source: Pinterest

Wall Art:

Arrange diskettes in a visually appealing pattern on a wooden or canvas board. Glue them in place and secure them with additional adhesive if needed. Paint or spray-paint the entire piece for a cohesive look.

Source: Pinterest



In conclusion, upcycling at home is a sustainable and rewarding practice that contributes to environmental conservation, waste reduction, and the promotion of creativity and community engagement. It empowers individuals to take an active role in shaping a more sustainable and responsible future.

What is your experience with upcycling? Register, share, and get inspired by other upcycling ideas in our HUB: https://www.scaleupcycling.eu

2. UPCYCLING AT SCHOOL

Why should we upcycle at school?

Upcycling at school offers numerous benefits, making it a valuable practice for both students and educational institutions.

Firstly, upcycling instills environmental consciousness by reducing waste and promoting sustainable habits. It serves as an educational tool, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills among students. Additionally, upcycling projects provide hands-on learning experiences that connect theoretical knowledge with real-world applications, enhancing students' understanding of environmental issues. Moreover, engaging in upcycling activities cultivates a sense of responsibility, encouraging students to actively contribute to a more sustainable and eco-friendly future. Overall, upcycling at school integrates environmental awareness, practical skills development, and a commitment to sustainable living into the educational experience.

Christmas Decoration made of wood leftovers at Tryavna Art School





Other examples of upcycling at school:

DIY School Supplies:

- Students upcycle materials like cardboard, old magazines, and fabric scraps to create custom notebooks, pencil holders, and bookmarks.
- These are made from shampoo bottles.

Source: Mama Creativa



Recycled Art Projects

- Upcycling is integrated into art classes by using discarded materials such as bottle caps, newspaper, and cardboard to create sculptures, collages, or mixed-media artwork.









Examples from the UPCYCLED CHRISTMAS EVENT at Tryavna Art School l(Photos: Tryavna Art School)





UPCYCLING in the Sculpture classes at Tryavna Art School in Bulgaria - reliefs collaged with leftover pieces of corrugated packaging. (Photos: Tryavna Art School)







UPCYCLING in the woodcarving and sculpture classes at Tryavna Art School using everyda objects

Garden and Composting Projects:

- Creating planters for a school garden out of plastic bottles or milk cartons and teaching students about composting organic waste for use in the garden.



Watch the video



Recycled Paper Crafts:

- Paper-making projects using recycled paper. Students can create their own paper by blending recycled paper scraps and shaping them into new sheets

Fashion and Textile Upcycling

- For fashion design projects using old clothing or fabric scraps, students can transform and customize garments, promoting sustainable fashion practices.





Photos from the activity in the Youth Center of Carabanchel Alto during the training Week of the ScaleUp project in Madrid, November 2023.

Eco-Friendly School Events:

- Promoting eco-friendly events such as upcycled fashion shows, art exhibitions, or science fairs, encourages a school-wide commitment to sustainability.



Source: Tryavna School

Upcycled Science Projects:

- Incorporating upcycling into science experiments by challenging students to build models or devices using discarded materials, promotes innovation and resourcefulness.

For instance, doing STEM activities that explore upcycling.

Upcycled Science Projects:

- Student engagement in creating energy-efficient projects using recycled materials. For example, they could design solar cookers using reflective materials like aluminum foil and cardboard.

These examples not only promote upcycling but also contribute to a culture of sustainability within the school community, fostering creativity, environmental awareness, and a sense of responsibility among students.

What does a greener school life mean to you?

How could you change your class/school environment to make it greener?

Add more examples of upcycling at school on the Scaleupcycling digital platform

3. UPCYCLING IN BUSINESSES

Why should we upcycle in businesses?

Upcycling in businesses holds several compelling advantages, aligning with sustainability, social responsibility, and economic efficiency. Upcycling aligns with the principles of a circular economy, where products and materials are reused, refurbished, remanufactured, and recycled. Businesses that actively participate in a circular economy contribute to long-term sustainability and resilience. Here are key reasons why businesses should consider incorporating upcycling into their practices:

Environmental Responsibility:

Upcycling reduces the demand for new raw materials, helping to conserve natural resources. By repurposing discarded items, businesses contribute to the reduction of waste, lowering their environmental footprint and promoting a circular economy.



Waste Reduction and Cost Savings:

Upcycling diverts materials from landfills, mitigating the environmental impact of waste disposal. By reusing existing resources, businesses can also save on disposal costs and reduce the need for new purchases, leading to potential financial savings.

By creating 'green' stores, Starbucks is able to reduce operating costs as well as minimize the impact of business practices on the environment - energy-efficient dishwashers, water-saving faucets, and carefully thought-out waste diversion. In addition, the company has a green building strategy that includes adjusting to low temperatures for its air-conditioned stores.

Innovation and Creativity:

Engaging in upcycling fosters a culture of innovation and creativity within the business. Employees are encouraged to think outside traditional boundaries, finding new and inventive ways to repurpose materials and products.

"PIRIN PEAKS"



The project includes three wall hanger designs. Some of the skis used for the production of the three new designs were found in the abandoned Konyarnika complex in Vitosha mountain, others were obtained as unnecessary outdated models from wardrobes in Samokov resort. Inspired by the vast peaks of the Bulgarian mountains, the hangers take on the shapes and vision of peaks.

Brand Image and Customer Perception:

Embracing sustainable practices, including upcycling, enhances a business's reputation. Consumers increasingly value environmentally conscious companies, and a commitment to upcycling can positively influence customer perception, loyalty, and trust.



Google powers its facilities with renewable energy sources, hosts farmers' markets as well as sustainable cooking seminars and brings goats to trim grass.

Compliance with Regulations:

Many regions have strict regulations regarding waste disposal and environmental impact. Implementing upcycling practices can help businesses comply with these regulations, avoiding potential fines and legal issues associated with improper waste management.

Employee Engagement and Satisfaction:

Employees often appreciate working for companies that prioritize sustainability. Involving staff in upcycling initiatives can boost morale, create a sense of purpose, and contribute to a positive work environment.

Product Differentiation:

Upcycling provides a unique selling proposition. Businesses can differentiate their products by highlighting the use of upcycled materials, appealing to environmentally conscious consumers who seek sustainable and distinctive offerings.

Long-Term Cost Benefits:

While there may be initial costs associated with implementing upcycling practices, businesses can experience long-term financial benefits through reduced material costs, waste management savings, and improved operational efficiency.

Examples of upcycling in businesses

Packaging Solutions:

- Design packaging using upcycled or biodegradable materials to reduce environmental impact.
- Encourage customers to return and reuse product packaging, contributing to a closed-loop system.

Less than 10 percent of IKEA's packaging is plastic. The objective is to eradicate the dangerous element totally.

Uniforms and Apparel:

- Upcycle old uniforms or textile waste to create new uniforms or branded merchandise.
- Collaborate with sustainable fashion designers to transform surplus materials into stylish workwear.

One of the world's most recognizable apparel brands, Timberland, uses stories about the environment to promote its products.

By launching its Timberloop product take-back program, Timberland joins an increasing number of clothing manufacturers that are prolonging the life of their products. Used Timberland footwear, apparel, and accessories can now be returned for a second chance at life. When items are returned, they will either be disassembled and the pieces recycled or repurposed into new products or they will be repaired and sold on a special website.

Examples from ScaleupCycling partner countries

The SOUR SISTERS PROJECT (Cyprus) is a project that started because two sisters were tired of their clothes, tired of going shopping, of the same standard fashion thing. They decided to get all their clothes and give them a new life: cut t-shirts, and trousers, paint them, spray them, bleach them.

The Ljubljana Reuse Centre (Slovenia), located in the Povšetova Collection Centre works in cooperation with Snaga. You can bring items that you no longer need and are in good condition. The centre will prepare the products for reuse and put them on sale at a symbolic price in the Green Shop.

ECOALF

Upcycling the Oceans is the main project of the Ecoalf Foundation (Spain), created by the EcoAlf brand, and the most ambitious because it fights against marine litter with the help of the fishing industry.

PUNKT WORKSHOP

PUNKT Workshop (Bulgaria) is a studio specialising in recycling furniture, re-imagining objects, recycled wood and metal, natural dyed textile, and discarded items into hand-made functional and artistic products.

Artucci is a haven for artistic upcycling located at the base of Buda Castle. Its workshop gives new life to carefully selected old and forgotten treasures, transforming them into exquisite designer jewellery, fashion accessories, and unique decorations.

ARTUCCI™

Electronics and IT Equipment:

- Refurbish and upgrade outdated electronics rather than disposing of them.
- Establish buyback or trade-in programs for customers' old electronic devices, promoting reuse.

Promotional Merchandise:

- Create promotional items using upcycled materials, such as recycled paper, reclaimed wood, or fabric remnants.
- Design promotional products that serve a dual purpose, like upcycled tote bags or USB drives.

Art Installations and Decor:

Commission local artists to create installations or artwork using upcycled materials. Decorate office spaces with upcycled items, such as lighting fixtures made from repurposed materials.



WASTE2WAVE project. Source: Atelier TRION

20,000 bottles flood our planet every second! That's 20 waves every second! And as we stand here, 180,000 bottles have already been thrown.
The installation is not disposable, it was first shown at TEDx Vitosha and will continue its life during various events to raise awareness about plastic pollution. The installation is an initiative of Tierra Verde Bulgaria and WIND2WIN, with a cause for a clean Black Sea!

Upcycled Food Waste:



Food waste
Source: Shutterstock

- Implement composting programs for organic waste generated in company cafeterias.

Upcycled Product Lines:

- Develop product lines that incorporate upcycled materials, appealing to environmentally conscious consumers.
- Highlight the sustainability aspect in marketing to differentiate the products in the market.

Interior Design Elements:

- Incorporate upcycled elements into office interiors, such as reclaimed wood paneling or upcycled metal fixtures.

Here we have an emergency exit sideboard and a wall cupboard of the Lufthansa Upcycling Collection, fitted with an original hat rack door of the Austrian Airbus 321

For more examples visit the Scaleupcycling Road Map

3. UPCYCLING IN ART

In art, upcycling is used as creative reuse, and in this sense, it visualizes the creation of works of art from waste materials, scrap, plastic collected from the oceans, textiles and even toys.

Artists raise our awareness of the pollution crisis and consumer culture, while helping make a positive social and eco impact. Through their art they express their despair at the consumer society and make a statement about the current culture.

Upcycling in art holds significance for various reasons, contributing to environmental sustainability, fostering creativity, and challenging traditional notions of art creation. Here are some key reasons why upcycling in art is important, along with examples:



Creativity and Innovation:

Reason: Upcycling challenges artists to think outside conventional artistic boundaries, encouraging creativity and innovation in their work.
Example: An artist might incorporate discarded electronic components into a multimedia installation, exploring the intersection of technology and art.

Nam June Paik, Bakelite Robot (2002) Tate

Social Commentary:



Venus of Rags, Michelangelo Pistoletto

Reason: Upcycling in art allows artists to make social and environmental statements by repurposing objects and materials with specific cultural or historical significance.
Example: People stand in front of rags, polystyrene, and acrylic cement coating sculpture "Venus of rags " made by Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto during the opening of the " Post Classic "exhibition at Rome's ancient Forum.

Educational Value:



Reason: Upcycling in art provides educational opportunities, teaching audiences about the potential of everyday materials and the importance of sustainable practices.

Example: Artists collaborating with schools might lead workshops on turning recyclables into art, engaging students in creative and environmentally conscious work.

Photo: Tryavna Art School, Bulgaria

Cultural Preservation:

Reason: Upcycling old or discarded items can contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage by incorporating elements with historical or cultural significance into contemporary artwork.

Example: An artist might use fragments of vintage textiles or old photographs to create mixed-media pieces that bridge past and present.

Reduction of Consumerism:





Tim Nobel & Sue Webster

Reason: Upcycling challenges the culture of consumerism by demonstrating that discarded items can be repurposed and given new life rather than constantly seeking new products.

Example: Artists like Robert Bradford use discarded plastic items to create unique art, challenging the industry's impact on the environment.





Robert Bradford - Recycled Toy Dog and Toy Rabbit

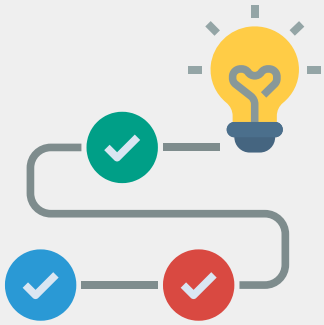
Share and upload examples of upcycling in art from your country at the scaleupcycling digital platform.
Start a conversation with a friend there on the reasons why upcycling in art is so important.

In summary, upcycling in art is important for its environmental impact, creative exploration, educational value, and its ability to engage communities in sustainable and thought-provoking practices. Artists who embrace upcycling contribute to a more sustainable and socially conscious art world.

How to start?

Discover Materials:	Look around your home, workplace, or community for materials that are no longer in use but hold potential for upcycling.
Seek Inspiration:	Explore online platforms, social media, and upcycling blogs to ignite your creativity. Here are some websites that may be of interest to you: • UpcycleThat • Popcy • Magazine Revibe
Start with Simplicity	For example, turn glass jars into candle holders or transform an old t-shirt into a reusable shopping bag.
Master Upcycling Techniques	Familiarize yourself with various upcycling techniques such as decoupage, stenciling, repainting, or repurposing. The following video explains how to apply these techniques: Video: How to Paint, Stencils, Transfers & Decoupage on Furniture
Engage in Workshops or Groups	Learning from others is an excellent way to enhance your upcycling skills and expand your network.
Embrace Resourcefulness	Keep an eye out for discarded materials in your neighborhood or local recycling centers.
Prioritize Safety	When using unfamiliar tools or materials, adhere to safety guidelines.
Embrace Experimentation	Upcycling is a journey of creativity; don't shy away from experimentation and embracing mistakes.
Share Your Creations	Your projects can inspire others to embark on their upcycling journeys, creating a positive ripple effect.
Mindful Environmental Impact	By breathing new life into discarded items, you play a crucial role in reducing waste and conserving valuable resources.

CONCLUSION



The benefits and impacts of upcycling are deeply related to improving our quality of life and saving our planet. Our deep understanding of upcycling and our efforts to incorporate into our everyday lives - at home, at school, in businesses and in art is of vital importance for our common future. We hope this practical module has inspired and provoked your creativity and inventiveness.



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



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