

How to inspire sustainable clothing consumption among households

An average European buys

42

clothing items every year,

although the sustainable amount would be max.

5

new items a year to stay within the planetary boundaries

We have looked into previous research on sustainable clothing consumption



2157

Research articles found in total



20

Included an intervention to change consumer behaviour

Intervention = any kind of attempt to change consumer behaviour for example by giving the participants information, challenges or developing their skills.

Practice = routine, everyday activities involving materials, meanings and competences

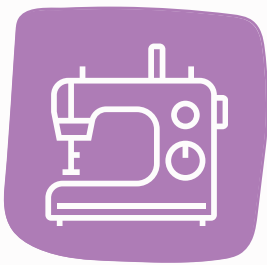


To promote more sustainable clothing consumption, we need to focus on everyday clothing practices, such as buying, storing and washing clothes. **Changing these social practices is the key to sustainable clothing consumption.**



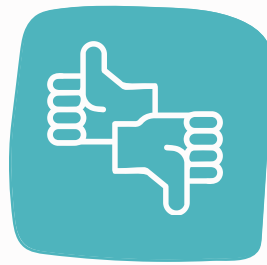
Examples and key findings from the analyzed studies:

MATERIALS



Access to community spaces, repair equipment and materials to learn about clothing making, mending and modification

MEANINGS



Reflections on why clothing is bought, kept, and used, emotional connection to clothes, new friends in communities, and empathy for textile workers

COMPETENCES



Learning new skills and approaches, evaluating needs versus wants and quality over quantity



Workshops were successful in increasing knowledge and changing attitudes, but actual changes in behaviour were less measurable.¹



Barriers to sustainable consumption included temptations by marketing and compulsive shopping tendencies.²



The participants blamed themselves for their unsustainable consumption instead of criticizing the fashion industry.³

References:

¹Saunders et al. (2024) DOI:10.3390/su16031282. ²Joyner Armstrong et al. (2016) DOI:10.1007/s10603-016-9330-z. ³Petersson McIntyre (2019) DOI:10.1080/1362704X.2019.1676506

Conclusions:

- Don't settle for only giving information, because then you only change awareness and not practices
- A holistic approach works best: consider the whole process of clothing consumption (e.g., storing, wearing and maintaining)
- Promoting sustainable clothing consumption is possible by focusing on changing everyday practices!

Our approach to interventions in CARE:

- Practice theoretical approach (focus on materials, meanings and competences)
- 18 months implementation time to ensure changes in practices
- Pre-post measuring the impact of the interventions
- Community, learning together and co-creation are at the centre of the interventions.

Learn more at:
circularhouseholds.eu



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