

# Carbon Literacy Project Ideas

## Doing it differently: Waste and resources

### Reuse and upcycling



'Doing it differently' for resources means getting access to the things we need without buying new, and getting rid of the stuff we don't need or want, without throwing them in the bin.

#### Project aims

- Households make items they don't want or need available for others to make use of.
- Households choose good quality second hand items over brand new more often.

#### How does that save carbon? What's the measurable outcome?

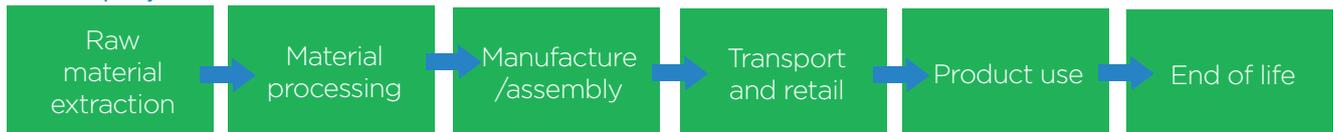
Any item we purchase new has a certain amount of embodied emissions associated with it. By choosing second hand over new items, we avoid those embodied carbon emissions. This relies on people who no longer need items, passing them on for reuse – so this act contributes to those avoided emissions as well. In addition, this also avoids any emissions associated with landfilling an item.

Even if items are broken or faulty, passing them on for reuse is beneficial – the item may be repairable with minimum effort and so could be easily made available for reuse. Upcycling refers to taking waste items and using them as raw materials to create new items, for example turning old jeans into a handbag, or waste wood into garden furniture. There may be some emissions associated with this process, but it is likely to be less than manufacturing from new, so reducing emissions. In addition, emissions are saved from avoiding landfilling items.

**Measurable outcome:** Reduced waste production and material consumption.

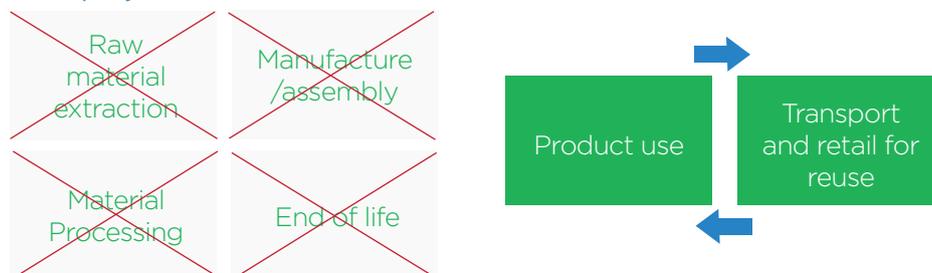
The CCF reporting tool and data collection guidance explains how you can monitor and evaluate how much your project has saved.

#### Before project



Product life journey.

#### After project



Product life journey when reuse is considered.

## What are the co-benefits? What are the potential 'community outcomes'

Many reuse and repair organisations are charities and local businesses – promoting their use will benefit them and the local economy.

Reuse projects can provide affordable products to their community, so saving community members money.

Learning skills to refurbish or repair items for reuse can improve people's confidence and perhaps possibly their employability. Learning and sharing these skills is a great opportunity for inter-generational interaction – for many older members of the community these skills are second nature.

## How do we demonstrate the co-benefits?

**Financial savings:** This is closely linked to the carbon savings you are already monitoring – getting the stuff we need without buying new will save carbon and money.

**Local economy:** Alongside collecting data about items people are reusing, you may be able to collect evidence of increased use of local shops and services. Alternatively, you could work with local reuse and repair services to evidence increase in their use.

**Improved skills, confidence and employability:** There are a variety of methods you could use to monitor changes in skills, confidence and employability of participants in your project. Evaluation Support Scotland have a range of resources, guides and tools to help you monitor your impact.

<http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/>

## What are the risks?

Just because people take second hand items, this only saves carbon if it is displacing the purchase of that item new. Many reuse projects find they receive many more donations than they are able to pass on/sell for reuse. Other reuse projects are motivated to provide affordable goods to families that are struggling – be aware that this means that you are unlikely to be displacing the purchase of new items in this case.

Also, be wary that by offering to accept donations for reuse you may be encouraging people to clear out old items in order to purchase new.

As recycling of different waste streams is improving all the time some 'upcycling' activities (e.g. turning waste into ornaments) may actually be preventing resources from being reused in a more efficient way.

## How do you increase reuse and upcycling in your community?

**Designing your project:** If you wish to develop a project to reduce consumption by increasing repair and maintenance skills or increase use of local repair/maintenance services, you should investigate what are the most important barriers and opportunities in your community. Your consultation could look into:

1. What items are people most likely to opt for second-hand, and where do they already get second-hand goods?
2. How likely people are to take part in your proposed activities
3. The real or perceived barriers to people opting for reused items/donating for reuse
4. What assets are there in the community, or wider opportunities, that could support your project aims?

The four questions, four zones grid from Shifting Normal can help you identify factors that could influence the willingness or ability to repair and maintain items.

### Example project activities

Below are some examples of typical activities that CCF projects run in order to increase reuse or upcycling rates.

**Reuse and repair directories:** You could compile a directory of local reuse services (e.g. charity shops) and encourage people to use them.

**Swap shops/sessions:** You could run 'swap shops' for items (e.g. clothes, toys, etc.) – these might be 'pop-up installations' or more permanent venues.

**Repair and reuse:** Projects that take items that are damaged or broken and repair and refurbish and make available for reuse.

**Dedicated reuse services:** Some projects focus on collecting a particular type of item for reuse (e.g. football boots/kit; furniture), sort and make available for others.

**Upcycling:** Projects that seek to turn materials and items destined for landfill/recycling into higher value products.

Visit our website to view a selection of case studies from past CCF projects:

[www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/ccf](http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/ccf)

