TEXTILE COLLECTION IN EUROPEAN CITIES

Used textiles: Waste or Value Seminar, Tallinn 12th December

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Project Goal

Gather and analyse *good cases* of used textile collection in *European cities*

Cases that can *inspire and guide* other cities/actors in Europe
## Country level data

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumption (kg/capita)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.7(^i)</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>9.0(^i)</td>
<td>14.5(^{iii})</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>26.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separate collection (kg/capita)</td>
<td>8.1(^i)</td>
<td>12.5(^i)</td>
<td>7.4(^i)</td>
<td>3.2(^i)</td>
<td>2.2(^{iv})</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>11(^i)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share of quantity placed on market (%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>11(^v)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%(^{ii})</td>
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\(^i\) Includes footwear  
\(^{ii}\) Shoes included in both denominator and numerator  
\(^{iii}\) Clothing only  
\(^{iv}\) Likely an underestimate  
\(^v\) Assumes that clothing represents ¾ of textiles put on the market
Antwerp

Notable approaches

• Unusual tender specifications

Tender specifications:

• Remove containers from streets
• Reuse/resale on local markets
• Social employment in collection and processing
• Extra points for good use of networks
Antwerp

Notable approaches

• Unusual tender specs
• Won by five complimentary organisations under one brand

*De Kringwinkel Antwerpen:* Second-hand shops and pick-up service

*Oxfam:* containers in recycling centres

*Wereld Missie Hulp:* Streetside containers

*Kindervriend and Mensenzorg:* door-to-door collection.
Antwerp

Notable approaches

• Unusual tender specs
• Won by five complimentary organisations under one brand
• Mix of collection concepts – but removal of containers from streets
Antwerp

Notable approaches

• Unusual tender specs
• Won by five complimentary organisations under one brand
• Mix of collection concepts – but removal of containers from streets
• Kringwinkel concept – wage support for sorting/processing/reuse
Antwerp

Notable approaches

• City tender process
• Collaboration of five organisations – branded as De Collectie
• Mix of collection concepts – but removal of containers from streets
• De Kringelwink concept – wage support for sorting/processing/reuse
• Focus on local solutions
Antwerp

**Successes**
- 12% increase in collection 2016 to 2017
- 80 new jobs for disadvantaged groups

**Challenges**
- Convincing partners to accept common brand
- Finding local markets
Gothenburg

Notable approaches

• Citizen survey

Attitudes 2012

• 71% donate *all* their used clothes. 10% don’t donate any.

• Donations *lowest in multi-apartment housing*

• 18% don’t trust collecting organisations.

• *Convenience is key.* 20% feel donating requires excessive effort
Notable approaches

- Citizen survey
- New initiatives with approved collectors
Gothenburg

Notable approaches

• Citizen survey
• New initiatives with approved collectors
• Collection in multi-apartment waste areas – emphasis on worn out textiles
Gothenburg

**Notable approaches**

- Citizen survey
- New initiatives with charities plus certification process
- Collection in multi-apartment waste areas
- Post-pilot survey

**Housing dweller survey 2017**

- **Half** of those who previously wasted all textiles, **now use containers**.
- **Only 50% aware** that they could deliver their **worn out textiles**
- A quarter still delivery elsewhere. **Don’t want to ’waste’ good quality**
- **60% are humanitarian** motivated; only **15% environment** motivated.
Gothenburg

Successes

• Monthly **collection rates doubled** in 1 year
• Collection rate (3.6 kg/capita) **50% higher than Swedish average**

Challenges

• **Communication issue** with worn-out textiles
• **Low economic value** of worn-out textiles
• Contamination by **smell of trash**
Notable approaches

- EcoTLC producer responsibility – certification, common brand, collaboration, collection point density goal (1500 inhabitants per point)
798 Collection points (up from 657 in 2015):

- 289 containers on public ground, mostly in streets (3 private/charity collectors)
- 40 new small multi-compartment containers in dense city areas (TriLib)
- 83 small containers inside supermarkets/retailers
- 333 containers on private ground including in multi-apartment social housing (Tisseco)
- 53 charity/reuse shops
- Mobile collection carried out by Trimobile with 49 different collection points served each month

Notable approaches

- EcoTLC producer responsibility – certification, common brand, collaboration, collection point density goal (1500 inhabitants per point)
- Mixture of many types of collection
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- EcoTLC producer responsibility – certification, common brand, collaboration, collection point density goal (1500 inhabitants per point)
- Mixture of many types of collection
- Le Recyclerie reuse shops funded by municipality
- Re-fabriquer à Paris remanufacture hub
Successes

• Increase in collection point density from 657 to 798, 2015-2017
• 31% reduction in textiles in mixed household waste 2011-2015
• Recyclerie Shops collected 2,665 tonnes of goods for repair, reuse

Challenges

• Collection rates half of French average
• Hard to live up to wish from Parisians for local solutions
• No recycling plants in Ile-de-France region and very few in France.
General findings

Municipalities are getting more involved

Why?
• Waste prevention/circular economy agenda
• Increased transparency & control
• Reduce waste handling costs
• Social benefits

How?
• Tender/certification processes
• More active guidance of collection
• Taking over operations
• Charging a fee for collection
General findings

A range of collection methods can reach more people

- Convenience costs money
- But reduces contamination
- Cost reduction possible by combining with other streams
Collaborations can be stronger than sum of individuals

- Common brand can *simplify and amplify communication*
- Potential for *increased efficiency*
General findings

Getting to know the citizen and the importance of communication

• Some very motivated/some not at all
• Many people care what happens to their textiles
• If social/humanitarian impacts important – these should be catered for

• In Albano Laziale (Rome) increased collection quantities by 65% via transparency on fate of textiles
The worn-out textile conundrum

• Asking for worn-out textiles is key to increasing collection
• But squeezes economics of collection – sorting costs increase, revenue decreases
• Communication can be a tricky
General findings

The local solutions conundrum

- Provides **local jobs**
- Taking **responsibility for own waste**

- **Higher processing costs**
- **Reuse options limited**
- **Recycling solutions very limited**
- Environmentally **not advantageous**
General findings

Need for financial support?

Collectors squeezed by municipal demands:
- Asked to accept worn-out textiles
- Asked to provide local solutions
- Payments per kg
- Global prices under pressure

In Paris, Antwerp, Rotterdam government or producers provide financial support:
- Wage support for ‘hard to employ’ in sorting/processing
- Investments in recycling R&D
Considerations for municipalities and collectors

**Set measurable targets** and set up systems for monitoring.

**Carry out a citizen survey** before designing measures for meeting targets.

**Consider increasing/ensuring transparency** in the fate of collected textiles and how the money raised from them is used e.g. Nordic Commitment. Many citizens care what happens to their textiles.

**Consider providing a range of collection/delivery possibilities.** Citizens differ in their daily habits and motivation. City landscapes vary.

**A collaboration between different actors** can strengthen collection, subsequent processing and sale.

**Make use of existing actors experience and knowledge** of textile collection, used textile processing and global markets. This is a huge asset.

**Consider a common brand** for all types of collection activities, containers and actors to reduce confusion/inaction among citizens and strengthen messages.

**Ensure the economic viability of collection and processing for all actors** in the value chain otherwise collection initiatives will not last.

**Ensure that collection and processing solutions adhere to national legal frameworks.** Existing collectors of used textiles may not be permitted to advertise for non-reusable textiles without becoming registered waste collectors.

**Be pragmatic about local solutions.** Goal that all textiles will be reused and recycled locally can reduce environmental and social benefits of the textiles in the short term. Think long-term.

**Social, circular economy and environmental gains** can be made by combining wage support for long-term unemployed, or disadvantaged groups in employment/training in collection and processing.

**Ensure clarity on communication on non-reusable textiles**

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**Recommendations for municipalities and collectors**

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- Ensure that collection and processing solutions adhere to national legal frameworks. Existing collectors of used textiles may not be permitted to advertise for non-reusable textiles without becoming registered waste collectors.
- Be pragmatic about local solutions. Goal that all textiles will be reused and recycled locally can reduce environmental and social benefits of the textiles in the short term. Think long-term.
- Social, circular economy and environmental gains can be made by combining wage support for long-term unemployed, or disadvantaged groups in employment/training in collection and processing.
- Ensure clarity on communication on non-reusable textiles.
Find final report here:

http://publicaties.minienm.nl/documenten/used-textile-collection-in-european-cities

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