Embracing the journey of circular textiles:
Experiences from a reuse social enterprise

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12 December 2018
Non-profit organization founded in 2004

- 11 shops (each 500m²), 1 sorting center (1300m²), 3 vans, 7 donation places outside of our shops, 88 employees

- In 2017 we had 1,500,000 visitors, 150,000 donators

- We circulate more than 2 million pieces of garments per year

- One of the most successful social enterprises in Estonia with a turnover of 2 million EUR
Our mission is to facilitate circular economy by making reuse and second hand shopping convenient and accessible for all Estonians!

We believe that things that are still usable deserve a longer life instead of ending up in a landfill!
OUR BUSINESS MODEL

- For re-design, theatres, movies and handicraft
- For sale at centres
- To our partners to re-use and remanufactoring
- For people in need
- Less trash, cleaner planet
PEOPLE IN NEED!
RE-DESIGN!
CHALLENGE

Fall 2017

- Local collaboration terminated due to lack of capacity and economic interest
- Increasing donations and decreasing quality
- Lack of textile waste management solutions in Estonia

50-60 tons per month to landfill!
**ACTIONS**

- Research of local utilization opportunities (reuse, recycling, incineration)
- Dialogue with more than 10 collectors/sorters in the Baltics, Nordics and East and Central Europe
- Consultation with leading Nordic and EU experts
- 3 trucks for quality tests

**OUTCOME**

- Not possible to incinerate
- Lack of textile reuse and recycling solutions in the region
- Difficult to sell already sorted goods to other sorters
- Quality from Eastern Europe is not interesting for European sorters
- Potential markets in Russia, Ukraine, Belarussia

Transparency!
“European market is full of goods like yours. Many shops take out the best and struggle with leftovers. In the near future they all will have to pay to get away such quality goods.”
CIRCULAR BUSINESS ECONSYSTEM FOR TEXTILES

Source: Fontell & Heikkilä, 2017
CIRCULAR STRATEGY

Sorting and value adding facility

- To increase and optimize own sorting capacity
- To increase the sorting quality
- To better serve stores and collaboration partners
- To test material recycling

Maximize local reuse

- Capacity building in stores
- Development of alternative 2nd hand retail and wholesale concepts
- Reuse of Estonian design

Pilot projects to investigate new opportunities

- Sorting pilot for value adding activities (wash, repair, mend)
- Collection with home delivery services
- Development of circular products
Maximising local reuse and cherishing Estonian design and production

Sorting pilot

Duration: 6 weeks, 10 stores

Result: 2926 pieces, 70% Baltika brands

Quality: Resell 61%; needs value adding 19%, material recycling 20%
Thank You!

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