The Shirt Off Your Back
Textile Forum
The State of Textile Recycling, Reuse, and Repair Today

Summary for Seattle SWAC
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Zero Waste Washington
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David Stitzhal
Climate Change Impacts From Clothing Production

- In 2015, emissions from polyester production equaled the annual emissions of 185 coal-fired power plants.
- Apparel & footwear industries account for 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions.
From 2000 to 2014, textiles increased 71% in the municipal waste stream.

The average American throws away 68+ pounds of clothing and textiles per year.
Locally, there are about 35,970 tons of textiles in the King County & Seattle annual waste streams combined.

Nationally, from 2010-2014, textile diversion rates remained stagnant, at round 15%.
Local Efforts

Threadcycle
Give *all* your clothes, shoes and linens for reuse or recycling

[Image of a woman sorting through clothes]

[Logos of various organizations]
In the U.S., only 10-20% of donated items are re-sold locally by retailers and charitable organizations.

Since 2014, the number of countries that ban or regulate used clothing imports has more than doubled.
China accounts for 30% of world apparel exports

U.S. purchases 1 billion garments from China annually

Used clothes from U.S. thrift markets MORE EXPENSIVE THAN New clothes from China
Recycling Isn’t Enough

FAST FASHION: New styles at low cost, with 52 micro-seasons per year and a new trend out every week.

GOAL: Buy as many garments as possible, as quickly as possible.

OPPORTUNITY: Come together and focus on the need to cut consumption and prevent waste in the first place.
Key Themes

1) Profit & Scalability
2) Segmentation
3) Inclusivity & Intersectionality
4) Economic Development & Policy
5) Metrics
Big Questions

- Is it better to join a program or create a new one?
- Which partners allow the greatest opportunity to leverage change?
- Who are the “unlikely” partners to bring into the conversation?
- Would it be useful to reframe the whole clothing waste prevention conversation?
- What metrics do we create and track?
- And, what criteria do we use to measure success?
Kamal Patel
April Atwood
recent informal survey: Millennials

- my class of Millennials (early to mid-20s)
- varied!
  - most typically spend $150 or less/month on clothing but several spend $300 or more per month, every month
  - the majority did more than ½ of their clothes shopping in person at a store; <20% did a majority of clothes shopping online
  - most donated unwanted clothes to a charity or thrift store or gave them away to friends/family
  - most have never put old clothes in a recycle bin; some admitted to putting them in the trash
  - most have NOT sold clothes online or at a consignment store (! ThredUp, Poshmark?)
Trend: capsule wardrobe
capsule wardrobe influencers
SLOW FASHION MOVEMENT

- Fair Wages
- Sustainable
- Healthy Supply Chain
- Ethical
- SCS / GOTS Certified Factories
- Recycle
- Fairtrade
- Keep Traditional Textiles Alive

- Buy Less, Choose Quality
- Fix Damaged Clothes
- Less Waste
- Reducing Carbon Footprint

- Improving Working and Living Conditions for People
- Build Relationships
- Choose Quality Not Quantity

- Supporting Local Communities
- Protect Our Environment
- Improving Working Conditions for People

- Safe Working Environment
- Buying from Charity Shops, Second Vintage, Recycled Fashion
Trend: don’t buy.....rent!
Solutions
GEAR THAT LASTS - Resale
The Renewal Workshop makes it easy for apparel brands and retailers to become circular. We operate a zero-waste system that recovers the natural and financial value from clothing and textiles to serve customers, partners and the planet.

The Renewal Workshop enables the Circular Economy for the apparel industry.
LIFESTYLE
Thank You