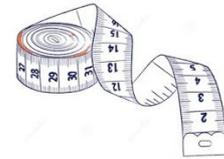
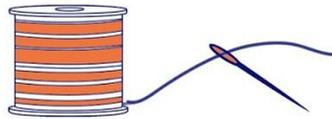
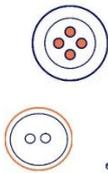


REALLY USEFUL SKILLS HUB



Learning from the Really Useful Skills Hub event
Monday 16th November 2015

Faiths4Change



MERSEYSIDE RECYCLING & WASTE AUTHORITY

**MERSEYSIDE... A PLACE
WHERE NOTHING IS WASTED**

Introduction

Faiths4Change recently organised a Really Useful Skills Hub focussing on the many benefits of textile reuse, and how organisations in Merseyside can harness these to benefit their communities and the environment. The event was creative, informative and resourceful, focussing on the development of a Circular Economy through textile reuse. Participants contributed to thought provoking and inspiring workshops, with various groups developing ideas of how they can help support and sustain one another.

The event was split into three areas: Enterprise, Knowledge & Skill Share and Health & Wellbeing. This document follows that structure to bring together information and ideas that were discussed in each of the three sessions. A list of useful resources that were mentioned during the event has been included.

A huge thanks to all of the groups who took part and contributed to this skill share resource. A list of all of the organisations with links to their websites can be found at the end of this document.

The Really Useful Skills Hub was set up by Faiths4Change with help from the Merseyside Textile Forum and the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority.

The Merseyside Textile Forum was established in a bid to prevent the estimated 22,000 tonnes of the region's clothes and textiles that end up in landfill sites every year. The Forum works to identify and support ways to increase the recycling and reuse of textiles.

Enterprise

- **Funding**

Clearly funding is a constant issue and concern for organisations.

Different organisations in the HUB are at different stages of development and are different sizes. There are some aspects that all organisations are thinking about:

- Finding funding
- Diversifying income streams
- Increasing enterprise opportunities

What finance models are available to organisations? Co op model, Community Interest Company. Groundwork are currently doing a study on ethical finance.

- **Selling**

What opportunities for generating income do the HUB members explore?

- Textile collections/rag man - organisations are having issues with this. Textiles aren't being collected, market saturated and price has dropped. This is an issue for organisations as it has been a good income stream for them.

- Selling clothing donations to community
- Selling products
- Putting on nights at their venues, with raffles, stalls, entertainment, sometimes ticketed events
- Chargeable classes for wider community

Selling craft items is a clear enterprise opportunity for organisations who deliver making activities. It is not widely done by the organisations present and there are some difficulties with it.

Issues- Skill levels fluctuate from participant to participant. The participants who attend sessions fluctuates too. Retaining skilled participants is an issue.

Selling items can take a lot of time.

Valuing your work - it is easy to see reuse/community made as a reason for it to be priced cheaply rather than as a USP!

Where to sell?

- At the organisation's own venue
- in shops/galleries
- at craft fairs
- at local events
- online

There are LOTS of great resources for selling craft items (see resource links). But key stumbling blocks are valuing what you/your groups have made enough to sell it, making sure it is of good quality and making sure it is desirable.

- **Opportunity?** - through the HUB could a central brand under which to sell craft items be created? Including a logo to go on items that makes a feature of the reuse, community made, Merseyside made.

The issue of running an online shop, the time and upkeep involved, could be lessened if this were centrally managed. Could the HUB organisations further work together in attending craft fairs? What about having a stall at the Christmas markets, which would be too expensive and difficult to staff for one organisation alone. Could provide great experience/learning opportunity for volunteers from all HUB organisations.

- **Having a commercial approach**

A few organisations shared how they approach community making with a commercial eye. They see their craft products as a business. They set out to create quality items that are saleable.

Knowing the desirability of vintage, upcycled, reclaimed furniture can allow organisations to sell items at a commercial rate.

Further to this two organisations share that when delivering workshops with a commercial client they will charge a commercial rate.

Does pricing at a commercial rate make customers value your product/service more?

Another aspect of this is how NFP organisations can link up with bigger organisations. Such as local supermarkets, chain stores, fabric companies, housing associations.

When dealing with corporations, NFP organisations need to find the value match. Large organisations/companies have Corporate Social Responsibility targets to meet. Further to this, they save money by getting rid of their waste product through organisations rather than sending it to landfill.

- **Item exchange** There are some items collected by groups that they struggle to reuse but are wanted by other groups. For example, a surplus of bedding that is hard to get rid of for one group is actively wanted by another group to make their fashion items.

Charities who are part of the Merseyside Textile Forum sometimes have hard-to-reuse items they would like to pass on to the HUB organisations. Through the HUB they can make offers to the network to collect these items.

How can this happen at a bigger level, across Merseyside?
Could the Merseyside Textile Forum facilitate it?

Organisations have found some items just don't sell in their shops. Could the HUB provide an opportunity to reallocate these items across the network to places where they will sell? Tapping into different taste markets to maximise purchase impact.
Issue - how should items be offered, allocated and transported?

Key Learning from Enterprise:

Making the most of commercial opportunities - pricing for the vintage/upcycled market as well as linking up with commercial organisations.

Knowledge & Skillshare

- **Stigmas and taboos**

Organisations told how there is an embarrassment in their communities about buying second hand clothing. Some open up their charity shop out of hours for people to buy items without being seen. They are frequently asked not to 'tell anyone I've been here'.

Organisations who work with women from different countries have found there is high engagement with reuse. The women they work with are often skilled at mending clothing and make the most of their textiles because of the practicality and money saving.

Barriers to reuse and recycling:

Knowing where to donate items

Skills lost from generation to generation - people are not as able to fix things

People can be worried about getting it wrong - through community making activities, people are taught skills, given info and given 'permission to make mistakes'

Fast fashion - devaluing of textile items. Is there an understanding of process and energy that goes into making a garment? High energy, lots of water used, high carbon, human labour and transport.

- **What are people's motivations to Reuse?**

In thinking about barriers and stigmas, the organisations discussed what motivations to reuse there are. Perhaps the biggest motivating factor for communities that the organisations work with is the financial implications. Individuals can save money and potentially earn money through reuse. Other factors are learning skills, meeting new people in a group setting, volunteering, gaining experience and the environment.

How aware of these factors are people when joining in with activities?

- **Language**

Tailoring reuse message to fit different audiences and entry points. This was a point that came up more than once during the sessions. What is the entry point into Reuse? What is the best way to talk about Reuse? At what point do you introduce the idea of reuse when delivering textile activities? How to communicate impact on the planet? To individuals, to groups, to the community.

It was put forward by organisations that often the environmental message was not useful to draw people in but is introduced by them as a topic during sessions.

Awareness raising is vital in widening participation.

Is the terminology clear? Do people understand that to Reuse is to find a new purpose for an item, perhaps by altering or mending it, and that to Recycle is to break something down and make something new out of it?

Recycling is better than throwing away but it still takes a lot of energy and so to reuse is more environmentally friendly.

- **Is the message clear?** Is a lack of joined up working affecting the impact of the message?

This needs leadership from the top, but in lieu of that, how do we spread knowledge, awareness and drive skills for textile reuse?

- **Opportunity - could we develop a Merseyside campaign that all organisations can use and deliver?**

As organisations, we are often working towards the same goals. There was a feeling that across Merseyside, organisations are delivering similar and often complementary work. It was felt that at some points the messages are overlapping. It was felt that joining together and speaking with one voice could make the message stronger and benefit all Hub members.

As a Hub, could a central campaign be developed that all members contribute to and deliver with their communities? A textile reuse campaign with a consistent message and branding could allow for greater impact, increased reach and shared resources.

Could we get the local authorities to engage with the shared Hub campaign?

- **Learning about Reuse as children**

Learning about reuse from an early age would help to divert waste and embed reuse in people's lives. Centralising reuse in schools could help to achieve a long term culture change in relation to diverting waste and the circular economy.

There is activity happening in some schools but could it be further embedded and spread to inactive schools through the Hub network? This taps into the shared Hub campaign idea as a way to increase impact of the reuse message. Could this shared Hub campaign feature a school's package?

How can reuse be embedded into the curriculum? Find the opportunities within the existing curriculum to bring in reuse. For example, teaching letter writing and research skills by getting children to write to their local MP about textile reuse in their area.

- **Information about how and where to reuse/recycle**

What's on offer in Merseyside? Where is the information? There are gaps in the coordination of knowledge share, signposting to websites and information, sharing of research that could benefit organisations work, such as university research.

A key information source is: <http://recycleformerseyside.com/>
(See Resource section for more)

There's lots happening in Merseyside but the information is disparate. There is a lack of knowledge about where to find the information.

Transition Liverpool are looking to collate and provide this information.

- **Merseyside Reuse Map**

Organisations at the Hub were interested in mapping out what is happening and what is available in Merseyside.

There are some issues with a project like this that would need addressing: the time involved to collate all the information, keeping the information up to date, where the information is held and how it is accessed.

- What happens to textiles at collection banks that cannot be reused? What is the makeup of this waste? Is it useful to creative groups rather than being ragged?
- MRWA carrying out a household waste analysis this year. This information can feed into organisations work.
- **Swap Forum**
As a network of organisations there is increased power to reuse and recycle. Can we exchange items between organisations to make the most of what sells/is reusable in different areas?

Opportunity - As well as sharing surplus reusable items, could we also share equipment, venues and skills across the network?

What do the organisations and their community groups need access to? Some items needed are skills, space, tools, knowledge, workshops, sewing machines, tutors.

Health & Wellbeing

- **What are the benefits of textile reuse at an individual level?** Financial implications can often be the best route for organisations to engage community members - there's lots of potential to save money through reuse. For textiles, mending, altering or making clothing can save money. Selling old clothes can generate income for individuals as well as organisations. There is potential to gain employment/become self-employment through textile reuse activities.

Wellbeing is an element of any reuse workshops as it creates opportunities for socialising, providing settings in which people interact and learn new skills.

- **What are the benefits for people when they join activities/groups?**
 - Reducing social isolation
 - Gaining skills
 - Gaining qualifications
 - Gaining volunteer experience
 - Increasing employability
 - Routes into education
 - Meeting new people, meeting people you wouldn't ordinarily connect with
 - Saving money
 - Fulfilment and sense of achievement
 - Increased confidence
 - Increased self-belief - participants have often come from background where they are not heard and even shouted down
 - Joining a community and feeling like a valued member of it
 - Having fun
 - Increasing social skills
 - Reduction in anxiety
 - Personal progression

Often, an individual's Health & Wellbeing needs focussing on before they can engage with wider issues. With improved Health & Wellbeing there is a trickle down effect allowing for increased engagement with the community and the environment.

5 Ways to Wellbeing (see resource links)

- **What are the entry points into the activities our organisations deliver?** Why do people come to us? Understanding this can help the organisations to increase their reach into communities.
 - Socialising
 - Looking for skills / to increase employability / to attend job clubs
 - Looking for links to or help with dealing with other services
 - Child care
 - Have been referred to the service

- **What about organisations/centres allows and helps people to join in?**
 Being a welcoming and safe space. Participants who we work with often have low confidence, some are vulnerable and some are traumatised.
 For some groups, having a female only space can help.
 Communicating who you are open to and what they can do/what you can offer
 Recognising differing needs, circumstances, motivations and abilities.
 Creating a space in which it's ok to try out new things and make mistakes
 Consistency of staff members
 Being personal
 Starting with the individual
 A multi faceted approach - signposting to services
 Being a part of the community
- **There is low engagement with textile reuse amongst men.** What are the routes in for men? Organisations spoke about using other activities to involve men in their activities: football, looking after chickens at the centre, jobs around the centre. The Style Factory are linking with a cycling cafe to organise a project called 'Sew Macho' where they will teach men to repair their cycling clothes.
- **How do we measure success?** Some organisations use the WEMWBS (see resources) but this scale can be hard to use, sometimes because of language barriers and sometimes because it is deemed too in depth/intrusive, sometimes because the interactions with community members are one off or sporadic.

All organisations collect data in different ways and at present do not communicate outcomes with each other.

Can the Merseyside Textile Forum support the development of a framework measuring social, health, wellbeing and behavioural change in terms of reuse? Enable organisations to feed in and develop projects using the framework to monitor outcomes. This could offer bigger picture capture of reuse economy, financial and social value. A cohesive framework that organisations work to could also help to inform activity, training and knowledge share in this area.

- **What about the Health & Wellbeing of organisations?** What is the picture like for organisations, what are the stressors and concerns?
 The issue of funding is a big concern for organisations. Many organisations reported budget cuts as a current issue. It is evident that the current economic climate has had a big impact on organisations. Organisations are dealing with limited time constraints, reduced scope, reduced staffing.

Lots of organisations are working on a project funded model, which means that lots of their time is spent looking for more funding as well as limiting the scope of their work to individual and time limited projects.

Longer term funding would allow organisations to sustain longer term campaigns, forward plan, give them the ability to deliver for and partner with other organisations.

- **Health & Wellbeing of the planet**
 There is a carbon, water and resource impact when textiles are made. The choices we make about our use of resources has an impact on the planet. There can be a

difficulty in that the choices are not always clean cut and fixing one problem can create another. For example, when there was a broad switch during the BSE scare from an animal based soap to palm based there was a knock on effect of increased deforestation.

Key learning:

Personal Health & Wellbeing needs to be addressed before people can engage with wider community and environmental needs.

How do we measure success?

Why community members engage with organisations/centres/activities/groups.

What next? Action Points

Sharing contacts between Hub organisations

The Hub members can easily contact each other when they have a surplus of an item or when they are in need of a particular item. Sharing of resources - documents, links, photographs can be shared. Can share event and project information with each other by linking up via social media.

Swap Forum

Will the above be enough to do this at a small scale? If you have further ideas about how to do it more formally/extensively, then get in touch with liz@faiths4change.org.uk

Shared Hub campaign

As a Hub, could a central campaign be developed that all members contribute to and deliver with their communities? A textile reuse campaign with a consistent message and branding could allow for greater impact, increased reach and shared resources. Could this shared Hub campaign feature a school's package? Could we get the local authorities to engage with the shared Hub campaign?

Further to this, could the HUB create a central brand under which to sell craft items? Including a logo to go on items that makes a feature of the reuse, community made, Merseyside made.

Could running an online shop as the Hub work? Could the HUB organisations further work together in attending craft fairs? Could volunteers and community members get involved?

Faiths4Change are looking into moving this action point forward.

Merseyside Reuse Map

Organisations at the Hub were interested in mapping out what is happening and what is available in Merseyside. Transition Liverpool are interested in collating this information.

Framework for measuring impact

Can the Merseyside Textile Forum support the development of a framework measuring social, health, wellbeing and behavioural change in terms of reuse? Enable organisations to feed in and develop projects using the framework to monitor outcomes. This could offer bigger picture capture of reuse economy, financial and social value. A cohesive framework that organisations work to could also help to inform activity, training and knowledge share in this area.

Resource links

Information about reuse and recycling in Merseyside:

Recycle For Merseyside & Halton <http://recycleformerseyside.com/>

Merseyside Textile Forum
<http://recycleformerseyside.com/waste-prevention/the-merseyside-textile-forum/>

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority <http://www.merseysidewda.gov.uk/>

Support to set up businesses:

Social Enterprise Network (SEN) - support the development and growth of entrepreneurship across the Liverpool City Region <http://www.sentogether.net/>

SEN also have a charter for making business in Liverpool greener, more ethical and more community-focussed <http://www.sentogether.net/social-value-charter/>

The Women's Organisation - the largest developer and deliverer of training and support targeting women in the UK <http://www.thewomensorganisation.org.uk/>

Merseyside Network for Change - provide support to groups wishing to set up as charities, not-for-profit companies, as well as providing other support to assist you in your community development goals <http://www.merseysidenetworkforchange.org/>

Community & Voluntary Services for each district:

- support and links to local community and voluntary action

Knowsley CVS <http://www.kcvs.org/>

Liverpool CVS <http://www.lcvs.org.uk/>

St. Helens and Halton VCA <https://www.haltonsthelensvca.org.uk/>

Community Action Wirral (formerly VCA Wirral) <http://communityactionwirral.org.uk/>

Sefton CVS <http://seftoncvcs.org.uk/>

Information about how to sell craft products:

The Design Trust - lots and lots of useful articles - <http://www.thedesigntrust.co.uk/>

Etsy - selling platform that also has lots of useful forums and blog posts www.etsy.com

Health & Benefit links:

WEMWBS (The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale)

<http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Documents/Wellbeing%20self-assessment.htm>

5 Ways to Wellbeing:

http://issuu.com/neweconomicsfoundation/docs/five_ways_to_well-being?e=1759881/2246404

Network of Wellbeing: <http://www.networkofwellbeing.org/>

Stitchlinks - research and movement which utilises crafts, in particular knitting, to improve wellbeing <http://stitchlinks.com/index.html> PDF of H&W benefits -

http://stitchlinks.com/PDFs/research/KNITTING%20EQUATION_June2015.pdf

Places to donate unwanted items:

Merseyside Textile Forum members are always looking for donations at their charity shops which will help them to raise funds for their fantastic charities:

British Heart Foundation – www.bhf.org.uk

Charity Retail Association – www.charityretail.org.uk

Claire House – www.claire-house.org.uk

Queenscourt Hospice – www.queenscourt.org.uk

Sue Ryder – www.sueryder.org

St Joseph's Hospice Association – www.jospice.org.uk

Salvation Army – www.salvationarmy.org.uk

Some other local places you can donate are:

Asylum Link Merseyside - <http://www.asylumlink.org.uk/>

Mrang - <http://mrang.org.uk/>

Whitechapel Centre - <http://www.whitechapelcentre.co.uk/>

PLEASE NOTE: this list has been compiled from the discussion notes from the Really Useful Skills Hub event held on Monday 16 November 2015.

If you would like to add any resources or links then please e-mail a description and website link to liz@faiths4change.org.uk

HUB organisations

Birkenhead Early Excellence

<http://www.beewirral.co.uk/> @BEEWirral Facebook (FB): BeeWirral

Blackburne House

<http://www.blackburnehouse.co.uk/> @BlackburneHouse FB: Blackburne House Group

Emansys

<http://www.emansysuk.com/> @emansys @MET_EnvTrust FB: Emansys

Emmaus Merseyside

<http://www.emmaus.org.uk/merseyside> @emmausmersey FB: Emmaus Merseyside

Faiths4Change

www.faiths4change.org.uk @faiths4change FB: Faiths4Change

Groundwork / Project UP

<https://www.groundwork.org.uk/sites/clm> @GroundworkCLM FB: GroundworkCLM

<http://www.projectup.org.uk/> @Projectup2013 FB: ProjectUP2013

Liverpool Friends of the Earth

liverpoolfoe.org.uk @LiverpoolFoE FB: Liverpool Friends of the Earth

Liverpool John Moores University Sustainability / Knowledge Quarter Sustainability Network

<https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/> @LJMUGoGreen FB: LJMU

Liverpool South Methodist circuit

<http://www.liverpoolsouthmethodist.org.uk/> FB: Liverpool South Methodist Circuit

Liverpool Quakers

<http://www.liverpoolquakers.org.uk> @LiveQuaker

Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority

www.merseysidewda.gov.uk @MerseysideRWA FB: MerseysideRWA

North Birkenhead Development Trust

<https://www.facebook.com/StJamesCentre>

Nugent Care

<http://www.nugentcare.org/> @NugentCare FB: Nugent Care

Sandra Cain

Active with lots of local groups, parent groups in Sefton

Speke Baptist Church

<http://www.spekebaptistchurch.org.uk/> @SpekeBaptist FB: Speke Baptist Church / The Noah's Ark Centre

The Sewing Rooms

<http://www.the-sewing-rooms.co.uk/> @SewFabAcademy FB: The Sewing Rooms (company)

The Style Factory

<http://www.thestylefactory.co.uk> @thestylefactory FB: The Style Factory

This is Cirrus

<http://thisiscirrus.co.uk/> @thisiscirrus

Tomorrow's Women Wirral

<http://www.tomorrowwomenwirral.org/> @tomorrowwomen FB: Tomorrow's Women Wirral

Transition Liverpool

<http://www.transitionliverpool.org/> FB: Transition Liverpool

Wirral Change

www.wirralchange.org.uk/ @WirralChange FB: Wirral Change

Waste Prevention Team, Wirral Council

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/> @wirralcouncil FB: Wirral Council