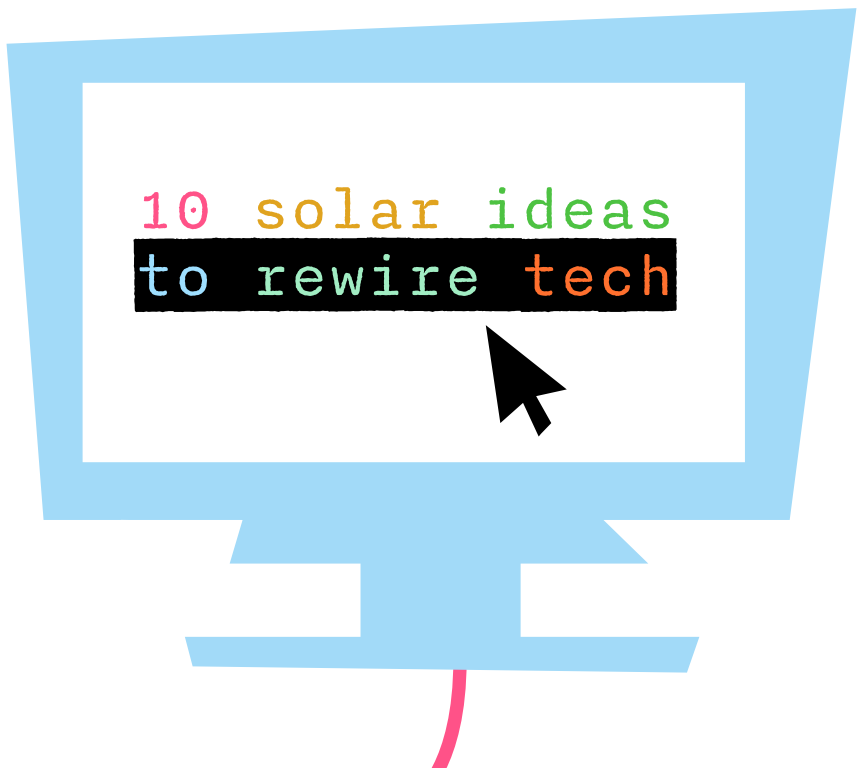


THE FOREVER COMPUTER



FOREWORD



Connected to one another, our machines were supposed to connect us. And while they have tightened some bonds, they have also broken others. On one side: brand-new laptops every two years, 5G everywhere, flawless screens. On the other: households without a computer, without a stable connection, without access to essential services.

To restore balance to this lopsided scale, solutions already exist. Across Europe, solidarity-based reuse actors are tackling digital and social exclusion in the most tangible way possible: they repair what was destined for disposal and put digital tools back into the hands of those who need them most. They repair, refurbish, redistribute, train, create jobs. And in doing so, they prove that another digital model is not only possible—it's already happening. This white paper gives those initiatives a voice.

The project that brings us together, WEEE for Solidarity, was born from a simple idea: to connect these scattered energies, circulate ideas, share what works—and, above all, why it works. The goal isn't a single, one-size-fits-all solution, but a collection of grounded practices rooted in different territories, united by a shared vision.

This white paper marks the first step of that collective journey. Drawing on field observations in France, Austria, Romania and Spain, it offers a curated selection of initiatives we believe are inspiring, replicable and impactful. And beneath them all runs a clear conviction: solidarity-based digital reuse is neither marginal nor naïve. It is a powerful lever to finally bring social justice, ecological transition and European cooperation into alignment.

A book to read, reread, and pass along.

A COLLECTIVE EFFORT LED BY :



EMMAÜS CONNECT

Emmaüs Connect is a French non-profit organisation fighting digital exclusion since 2013. In 2020, *Lacollecte.tech* was launched to develop local networks for the refurbishment of IT equipment, based on principles of solidarity and aimed at supporting the most disadvantaged populations.

➔ emmaus-connect.org

➔ lacollecte.tech

ATELIERE FĂRĂ FRONTIERE

Ateliere Fără Frontiere is a Romanian social enterprise that creates jobs for people from vulnerable groups through workshops rooted in a climate-resilient economy, including environmentally and socially certified farming, waste collection, refurbishment, upcycling and recycling.

➔ atelierefarafrontiere.ro

AERESS

(Asociación española de recuperadores de economía social y solidaria)

The Spanish Association of Social and Solidarity Economy Recovery Organisations (AERESS) is a national non-profit association representing social and solidarity-based organisations specialised in the circular economy and waste management, with a strong focus on labour market inclusion for vulnerable groups.

➔ aeress.org

RE-USE AUSTRIA

Re-Use Austria is the Austrian reuse and circular economy network, bringing together 47 member organisations. It is a non-profit NGO and a national umbrella organisation for social and charitable organisations active in the field of reuse.

➔ reuseaustria.at

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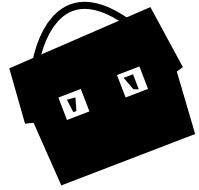
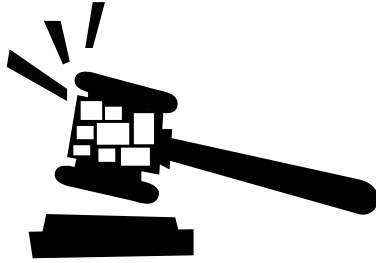
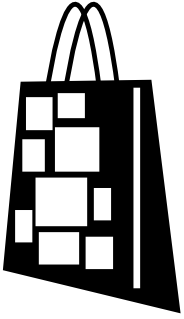


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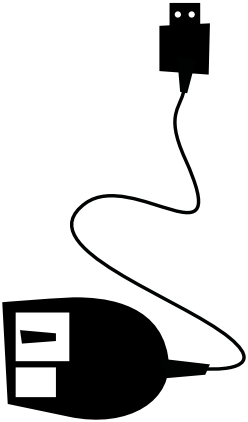




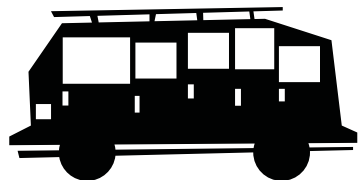
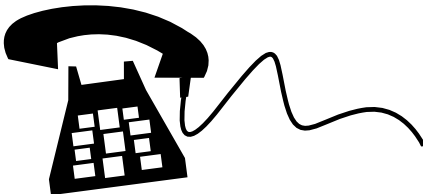
THE



10



IDEAS



THERE'S THAT JUNK DRAWER.

The one stuffed with three old phones, two incompatible chargers, ten USB cables and not to mention forgotten computer screens.

Multiply that by millions of European companies—and just as many households—and you're looking at a hidden resource richer than most mines.

Faced with that reality, there are two options : sit back and complain, or get organised. Across Europe, collectives, associations, local authorities—and even media outlets—have chosen the latter.

They collect, repair, pass on, train, and above all, restore value to what industry has already declared obsolete.

Together, these ten initiatives tell a very different story from the usual “responsible digital transition” narrative. They tell stories of cooperation, jobs coming back, kids cracking open smartphones at school, and repair trucks pulling up in public squares. In short : digital reuse that actually works.

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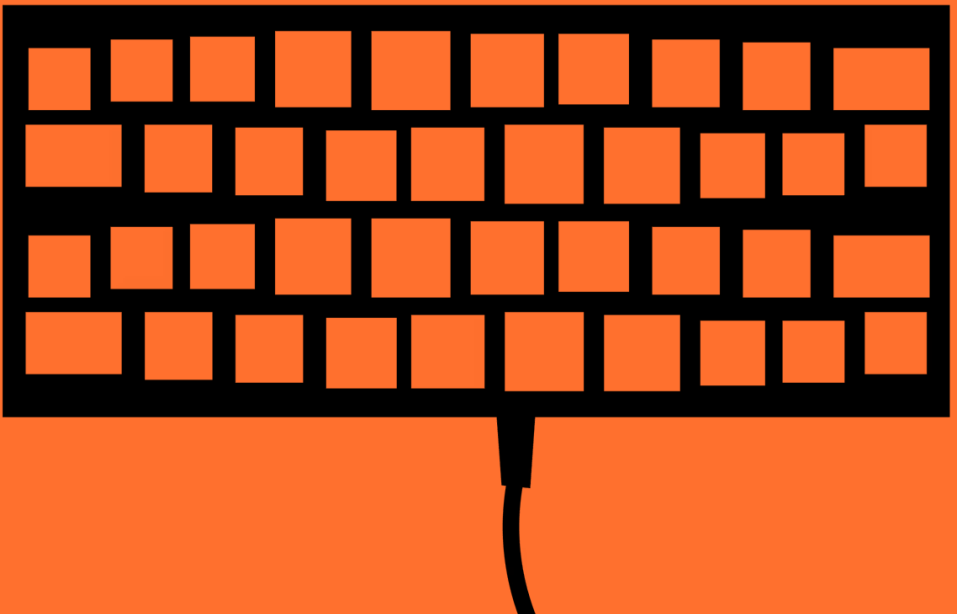
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A COMPUTER FOR LIFE



WHAT IF WE STOPPED CHANGING MACHINES EVERY SEVEN YEARS? WHAT IF THE SAME COMPUTER FOLLOWED US FROM SCHOOL TO RETIREMENT?

Do you remember your first computer? Maybe you still recall the worn patina sliding under your fingertips. Maybe you even shed a tear when you swapped that faithful companion for a new machine reeking of fresh plastic. Let's be honest : that breakup never had to happen.

Imagine a world where every citizen receives a computer at 16 and keeps it for life. Their computer. For now, this utopia lives quietly in the pages of a work of fiction, *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* by American solarpunk author Becky Chambers.

“They pulled the pocket computer from their loose trousers and tapped the screen on with one finger. It was a good computer. As was customary, it had been given to them on their sixteenth birthday. It had a beige casing, a crisp display, and in all the years they'd carried it, they'd only needed to repair it five times. A reliable machine, built to serve them for life—like all computers.”

Fiction for now. But tomorrow? Is it really so far-fetched to imagine a world where we stop throwing away perfectly repairable devices? Maybe a little, when you know that in 2023, eight out of ten discarded phones were still working.

Still, let's imagine it. In this world, we use our machines for decades. Because let's remember : silicon doesn't wear out. Hardware is standardized, making it repairable, upgradeable—essentially eternal. Integrated circuits stop going out of fashion and start lasting much longer. By drastically reducing hardware manufacturing, we also reduce the main source of greenhouse gas emissions from digital technology—manufacturing itself (devices, networks and data centers), which accounts for 60% of the digital footprint in France.

In this world, our machines follow us from school to retirement. We're allowed to fall in love with them again, just by tapping their keyboards, because nothing will ever take them away from us. We can finally ditch the idea of digital technology as a *pharmakon* — Plato's old idea of something that's both poison and cure. We can even say “digital will save us” without bullshitting. In short : we can finally love our computers for life.

AUSTRIA

“THERE ARE FASCINATING PROJECTS IN AUSTRIA, SUCH AS WIDADO, THE RE-USE ONLINE MARKETPLACE, AND THE MOBILE PHONE COLLECTION INITIATIVE. THESE ARE SUCCESSFUL BOTH IN TERMS OF THEIR DIGITAL ASPECTS AND THE SOLIDARITY-BASED PARTICIPATION OF MANY DIFFERENT COOPERATION PARTNERS.

HOWEVER, THERE ARE STILL MANY CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME IN THE AREA OF FAIRER DISTRIBUTION OF EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING FOR DIGITALLY EXCLUDED GROUPS OF PEOPLE AND THE GROWING TENSIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL MISSIONS AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ECONOMIC MODELS, STILL HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON SHORT-TERM FUNDING.”

PETER WAGNER, RE-USE AUSTRIA

AMAZON BUT MAKE IT SOCIAL



**ORDERING A REFURBISHED COMPUTER
AS EASILY AS A TOASTER—WHILE
SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT?
IN AUSTRIA, IT'S ALREADY HAPPENING.**

Widado was born from a simple observation: on their own, social economy organisations struggle to exist online. Together, they become visible, credible, and economically competitive.

Powered by the Re-Use Austria network, the platform aggregates the catalogues of 25 reuse organisations. Every feature is built to match real-life constraints: uneven digital skills, work integration programmes, limited resources.

The tool handles stock management, customer relations, social vouchers, and even uses AI to make the platform accessible to all profiles.

The result is a cooperative marketplace, easily replicable across Europe, that pools costs, creates inclusive jobs for people facing poverty or unemployment, and gives digital equipment a second life.

➔ THE SECRET SAUCE ➔

Widado isn't just a website—it's shared infrastructure. Instead of each organisation building its own e-commerce solution, they join forces to gain visibility and economic impact.

★ STEAL THIS IDEA ★

- ➔ Pool digital tools instead of building them in silos
- ➔ Design platforms around human realities, not tech fantasies
- ➔ Turn cooperation into a competitive advantage

👁️ ALSO WORTH A LOOK 👁️

Label Emmaüs (France)

Label Emmaüs launched the first non-profit marketplace powered exclusively by social and solidarity economy organisations, with a catalogue made entirely of reused products. It is also one of the key inspirations behind Widado.

The Good Plug (Spain)

The Good Plug is a marketplace bringing together refurbished tech offers from multiple reuse actors on a single platform. The project is led by a social and solidarity economy organisation committed to supporting people facing or at risk of social exclusion. Backed by partners such as Fundació Engrunes and Associació Social Andròmines, the initiative combines social reintegration with circular economy ambitions.

THE SURPRISE BAG CHALLENGE



IN AUSTRIA, REUSE IS A NATIONAL HABIT. EVERY YEAR, A LARGE-SCALE CHALLENGE INVITES CITIZENS TO DROP OLD PHONES IN A “SURPRISE BAG” AND TURN THEM INTO A FORCE FOR GOOD.

Throwing away your old phone? Unthinkable. Since 2005, the nationwide Wundertüten (“surprise bag”) campaign has turned a mundane act into a reflex of solidarity. Every year between November and January, nearly half a million old smartphones are collected in brightly branded bags. From there, they begin a second life. Two-thirds are refurbished, the rest recycled, with raw materials reinjected into new devices. Since its launch, the campaign has collected nearly 8 million phones and redistributed €11 million to families in need.

Behind this king-size operation is a finely tuned coalition: Hitradio Ö3 (the country’s most listened-to radio station), Caritas Austria, the Austrian Post, and a vast network of local collectors—schools, companies and associations. The message is simple, clear and straight to the point: your old phones still have value.

➔ THE SECRET SAUCE ⇐

Simplicity and consistency. A massive, recurring campaign backed by media, institutions and local actors. Giving your phone is no longer exceptional, it becomes part of everyday citizenship.

★ STEAL THIS IDEA ★

- ➔ Use mass media to reshape collective imagination
- ➔ Make donating as easy as possible
- ➔ Combine reuse and social inclusion in one clear story

For Austrians, it’s become second nature: empty your drawers so others can connect. The campaign does more than give devices a second life. It creates jobs for people with disabilities and funds Caritas emergency aid. With smooth logistics and a clear, positive story, every phone becomes a triple win: for the environment, for solidarity, and for digital inclusion.

👁️ ALSO WORTH A LOOK 👁️

Mobile BAG (Luxembourg)

In Luxembourg, the Mobile Bag initiative—run with the national post, Digital Inclusion, and SOLINA Aarbechtshëllef asbl—lets people drop unused smartphones into envelopes nationwide. Refurbished devices go to those without phones, while broken ones are responsibly recycled.

Emmaüs Connect, Radio France, and France TV (France)

“How many computers and phones are gathering dust in your office?” Emmaüs Connect’s national campaign, with France’s public radio and TV, urges companies to donate unused computers and phones. Idle devices are transformed into tools for those in need, reaching 26 million viewers and listeners.

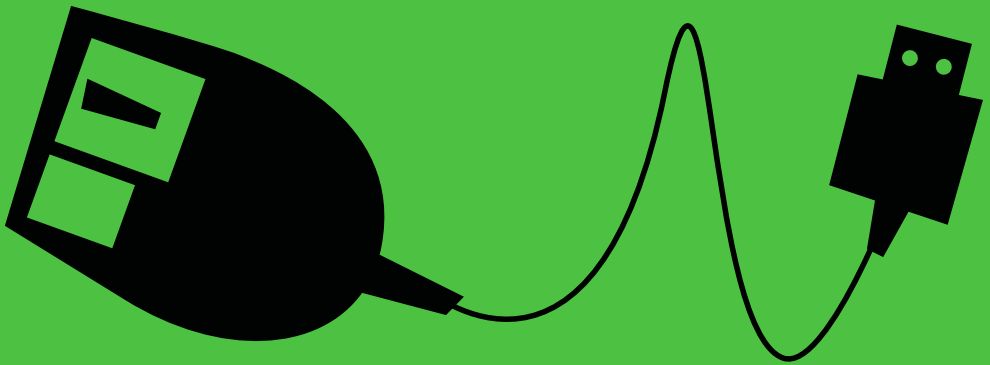
SPAIN

“THERE ARE DISPARITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, BUT SOME REGIONS PLAY A PARTICULARLY INSPIRATIONAL ROLE, SUCH AS CATALONIA, COMBINED WITH A STRONG CULTURE OF 'DOING TOGETHER'.

THESE INITIATIVES ARE MAKING HEADWAY ON VARIOUS LEVELS- ENGAGING CITIZENS, BOOSTING PRACTICAL SKILLS, TEARING DOWN PRACTICAL BARRIERS AND SCALING THOSE EFFORTS UP TO INCREASE REUSE ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.”

EMMA ERWIN, AERESS

THE REPAIR COMMUNITY



FROM BARCELONA TO ARGENTINA, EREUSE TACKLES A FAMILIAR PARADOX: SURPLUS COMPUTERS ON ONE SIDE, DIGITALLY EXCLUDED COMMUNITIES ON THE OTHER, WITH ONE SIMPLE, RADICAL IDEA—ORGANISE LOCAL REUSE AND KEEP IT OPEN.

It all began in Catalonia in 2014. The regional government faced a problem that was hard to ignore: 30,000 computers to discard, over 90% still functional. Instead of waiting for a top-down fix, local actors—associations, refurbishers, social inclusion organisations—built their own answer. Not a centralised platform. Not a flashy startup. A community.

Today, eReuse operates in around ten cities across eight countries. Its strength lies in local networks: grassroots collectives that pool efforts to collect, refurbish, and redistribute digital devices. In Barcelona alone, 18 organisations work

hand in hand to make it happen.

Devices are tracked using open-source tools, sorted, tested and refurbished, often with the help of integration workers or students doing community service. Open-source software makes the initiative modular, like a giant Lego set: modular tools that can be adapted, combined, and reshaped to fit the needs of each community. Once restored, the devices find their way into the hands of those who need them most—families, local associations, and community organisations that would otherwise be left offline. Once back in circulation, each device scores triple: less waste, lower CO₂ emissions, and more digital inclusion. Who could ask for more?

⇒ THE SECRET SAUCE ⇐

An ecosystem of local actors powered by open-source tools designed for replication. Here, free software becomes a true lever for social and environmental impact.

★ STEAL THIS IDEA ★

- ➔ Build autonomous local circuits, not centralised platforms
- ➔ Develop open-source tools to ensure replicability
- ➔ Treat equipment as a community service, not just a product

👁️ ALSO WORTH A LOOK 👁️

Ordi Grand Ouest, Riusu and LaCollecte.tech (France)

Across France, regional networks of social tech refurbishers are emerging, turning unused devices into tools for learning and connection. In Brittany, Ordi Grand Ouest collects and refurbishes computers, while Riusu leads low-tech reconditioning efforts in Corsica, and LaCollecte.tech coordinates multiple local networks within the Emmaüs Connect ecosystem. These “learning communities” go beyond repair, experimenting and innovating to boost the impact of circular tech.

TEENS REBUILDING THE FUTURE



IN CATALONIA, TEENS DON'T JUST CONSUME
DIGITAL TECH. THEY TAKE IT APART,
REPAIR IT, RECYCLE IT, AND BECOME ITS
BEST AMBASSADORS.

Since 2021, Generació Reset, led by Associació Social Andròmines and Eduxarxa.coop, has been turning students into reuse experts. The goal? Raise awareness of digital tech's environmental and social impact... but above all, get young people to take action.

All public and private schools in Catalonia can join. Teachers receive a complete kit: guides, videos and materials for four classroom sessions. Then come hands-on workshops where students roll up their sleeves, wiping data, testing, dismantling, and repurposing components. Digital technology stops being a black box. It becomes something they can touch, understand and transform.

And this is where Generació Reset truly comes alive. Once trained, students are free to launch their own awareness initiatives. In Barcelona, some ran “Let’s dissect mobile phones!” workshops, showing their peers exactly what’s inside a smartphone—and why it matters for the planet and society. In Sant Adrià de Besòs, middle and high school students organised a large-scale smartphone collection. In Mollerussa, others led awareness campaigns. Everywhere, they spread the message that digital technology can be both sustainable and socially responsible.

Since it launched, Generació Reset has engaged over 6,500 Catalan students, putting them at the forefront of a movement to “reset the system” and promote conscious, sustainable tech habits.

➔ THE SECRET SAUCE ⇐

Practice, pedagogy and responsibility combined. Students do not just learn about change. They become the drivers of it in their schools and communities.

★ STEAL THIS IDEA ★

- ➔ Embed hands-on practice in the curriculum to make the message tangible.
- ➔ Empower students to lead local initiatives and amplify impact.
- ➔ Design a flexible, modular programme that works for any type of school in order to educate youth on the importance of reuse for solidarity

👁 ALSO WORTH A LOOK 👁

NIRD (France)

With the NIRD project, students pitch in to refurbish old computers themselves. The repaired devices are then reused by the school, shared with neighbouring classrooms, or given to families in need, combining hands-on education with community support.

WHEN REPAIR HITS THE STREETS



IN BARCELONA, A TRUCK TOURS THE CITY
TEACHING PEOPLE HOW TO FIX WHAT
THEY THOUGHT WAS BROKEN FOR GOOD.

Since 2019, Reparatruck has brought soldering irons into public space. Led by social economy organisation Solidança and the City of Barcelona, this mobile workshop offers free, hands-on repair sessions to anyone willing to learn.

For three hours, small groups of 12 to 15 participants learn to fix small appliances, electronics or bikes. Guided by a specialist technician, they diagnose, dismantle, and breathe new life into their devices—turning what would have been trash into something usable again in minutes. What was destined for the bin gets a second life. What felt intimidating becomes accessible.

The results speak for themselves: in its first year alone, Reparatruck carried out 50 interventions across 27 municipalities, completed 213 repairs, raised awareness among 789 people, and kept 660 kilograms of equipment out of the trash... all in just three months.

➤ THE SECRET SAUCE ⇐

Reparatruck is above all a mobile, hands-on approach to learning. Bringing repair into public spaces makes it visible, accessible, and collective. Participants don't just watch: they learn, experiment, and walk away with real skills to extend the life of their devices.

★ STEAL THIS IDEA ★

- ➡ Deploy mobile units to make reuse and repair accessible everywhere, even in remote neighbourhoods.
- ➡ Combine hands-on learning with practice so citizens leave with tangible skills.
- ➡ Use public spaces to boost visibility and citizen engagement.

👁 ALSO WORTH A LOOK 👁

Repair Café Mobile (Belgium)

Part of the global Repair Café movement, this mobile workshop brings repair into the public space — from festivals to local streets — fixing everything from small electronics to everyday objects. By taking repair on the road, it turns a practical act into a shared, visible, and empowering community experience.

La Camio'Net (France)

In Grenoble, La Camio'Net hits the road to offer free computer repairs to students, turning a van into a moving workshop. It delivers hands-on technical help directly to campuses, restoring essential tools for studying, working, and staying connected.

ROMANIA

“SOLIDARITY-BASED DIGITAL REUSE REMAINS EXCEPTIONAL IN ROMANIA. THE COUNTRY IS STILL LARGELY RELIANT ON A RECYCLING-BASED MODEL, WHICH RELEGATES REUSE TO A PARALLEL ECONOMY.

YET, ACTORS SUCH AS ATELIERE FĂRĂ FRONTIERE DEMONSTRATE THAT ANOTHER PATH IS POSSIBLE, SHOWING POSITIVE IMPACTS BOTH FOR THE WORKERS IN THE WORKSHOPS AND FOR THE RECIPIENTS OF RECONDITIONED EQUIPMENT, PROVING THAT THESE MODELS DESERVE SUPPORT AND BELIEF.”

FLORIN NICULAE, ATELIERE FĂRĂ FRONTIERE

THE CLASSROOM UPDATE



**EACH YEAR IN ROMANIA, THOUSANDS
OF DISCARDED COMPUTERS GO TO
CLASSROOMS INSTEAD OF LANDFILLS.
THROUGH DĂM CLICK PE ROMÂNIA,
REFURBISHED DEVICES HELP SCHOOLS
AND NGOS GET ONLINE.**

Across Romania, millions face poverty and social exclusion—28% at risk, 17% in severe deprivation, the highest in the EU (Eurostat).

reDEEE, part of Ateliere Fără Frontiere, is the country's only workshop where discarded electronics are collected, recycled, and refurbished by participants in a two-year socio-professional integration programme. Repairing devices here means learning a trade, building confidence, and reclaiming a place in society.

Its flagship initiative, Dăm Click pe România (“Let’s Click on Romania”), fights digital inequality by providing refurbished computers to schools, NGOs, and social institutions. Thousands of children still study without reliable access to technology, limiting their participation in an increasingly digital world.

⇒ THE SECRET SAUCE ⇐

reDEEE repairs inequalities while repairing electronics. Participants learn a trade, gain confidence, and prepare for work, while Dăm Click pe România delivers the refurbished devices to schools and organisations that need them most.

★ STEAL THIS IDEA ★

- ➔ Start from uncomfortable data and let it drive action
- ➔ Use transparent calls for projects focused on real needs
- ➔ Link reuse, education and job inclusion

Each year, schools and NGOs apply for support while reDEEE participants dismantle, clean, and repair donated devices.

Since the programme began, over 36,000 computers have been refurbished—reaching 27% of Romanian schools and hundreds of NGOs. Nearly 600,000 students and teachers can now click, search, learn, and create—finally on the digital train instead of left behind.

👁️ ALSO WORTH A LOOK 👁️

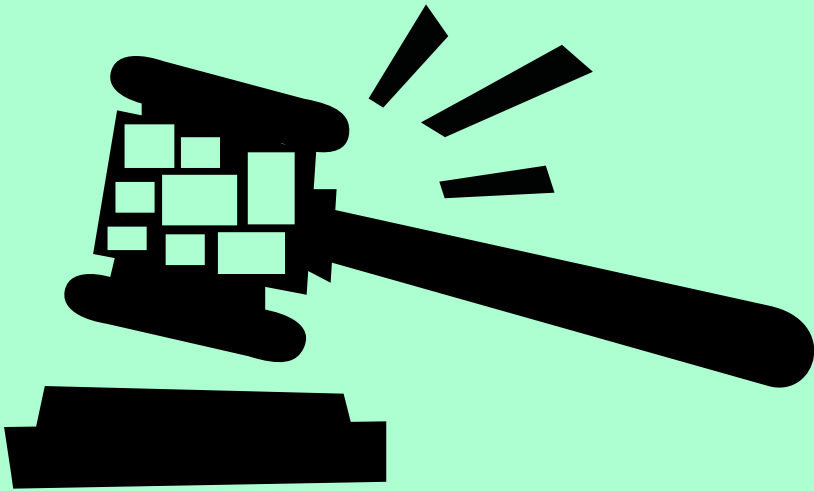
Labdoo (Europe and beyond)

Across Europe, the Labdoo community collects and refurbishes laptops before delivering them to schools and educational projects in need. Driven by volunteers, the initiative blends tech reuse with humanitarian action, building a global solidarity network around access to education.

Phones without borders (Greece)

Smartphones collected from across Europe find a second life in Greece, where asylum seekers and refugees repair them before they reach people in need. The project turns discarded devices into tools for connection, skills, and fresh opportunities, proving that e-waste can have a human impact.

THE POLITICAL COALITION SHAKING UP REUSE



**IN A COUNTRY WHERE E-WASTE PILES UP
AND COLLECTION LACKS STRUCTURE,
THE PRODEEE COALITION IS CREATING
A COLLECTIVE RESPONSE THAT BLENDS
HANDS-ON ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION
WITH POLITICAL ADVOCACY.**

Since 2021, ProDEEE has brought together Romania's three recycling heavyweights: ECOTIC, ENVIRON, and RLG. Their mission? First, unite companies, authorities, and local actors to make sense of a legal framework scattered across more than 100 regulations. Then, enforce Europe's best standards nationwide. A diplomatic and operational challenge all at once.

And the stakes are high. Much of Romania's e-waste collection still runs through informal channels, often managed by marginalised communities like Roma people. These collectors are vital to the system but work in precarious, sometimes dangerous conditions. ProDEEE steps in with training, formal jobs, and measures that combine social inclusion with environmental impact.

The coalition also tackles economic contradictions. In Romania, landfilling costs less than recycling—around €30 per tonne compared with €500 per tonne in Germany—and recycled materials are often more expensive than new ones. To reverse the trend, ProDEEE has introduced economic incentives and built a national repair and reuse network, with cross-border partnerships to spread best practices.

ProDEEE also reaches out to the public. In 2024, it launched a nationwide campaign encouraging citizens to drop off their used devices at collection points. By acting on all fronts—policy, industry, communities, and the wider public—the coalition tells a larger story: that of a citizen-led movement capable of moving an entire country.

➔ THE SECRET SAUCE ⇐

ProDEEE is more than recycling. Its strength lies in political advocacy, where ecology, social inclusion, and lobbying reinforce each other to create real systemic change.

★ STEAL THIS IDEA ★

- ➔ Build broad coalitions that bring together public authorities, private companies, and NGOs.
- ➔ Use political advocacy to promote reuse and repair.
- ➔ Formalise informal workforces by investing in training and creating official jobs.

👁️ ALSO WORTH A LOOK 👁️

WEEEWaste (Europe)

Across Europe, the WEEEWaste project is working to fix one of the biggest blind spots of the circular economy: fragmented e-waste systems, by helping public authorities rethink and align policy. The goal: break down fragmented systems and accelerate the shift from disposal to repair, reuse, and truly circular tech.

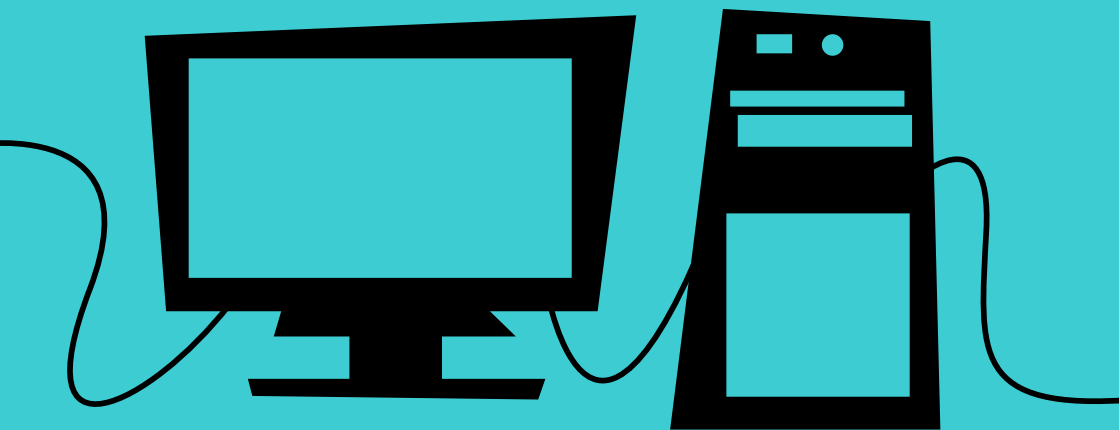
FRANCE

“IN FRANCE, SOLIDARITY-BASED DIGITAL REUSE HAS GAINED NATIONAL RECOGNITION THROUGH THE FRANCE NUMÉRIQUE ENSEMBLE STRATEGY, WHICH SETS THE OBJECTIVE OF PROVIDING RECONDITIONED IT EQUIPMENT TO 2 MILLION DISADVANTAGED HOUSEHOLDS BY 2027.

THIS SENDS A STRONG POLITICAL SIGNAL AND HAS HELPED MOBILISE THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM AROUND A SHARED GOAL. HOWEVER, SUSTAINING THIS MOMENTUM WILL REQUIRE ADEQUATE RESOURCES AND CONTINUED POLITICAL COMMITMENT BEYOND 2027: A KEY CHALLENGE FOR THE YEARS AHEAD.”

CAMILLE BARDOU, EMMAÛS CONNECT

MASS DISTRIBUTION OF DIGITAL SOLIDARITY



**NO FRESH PASTA OR TOMATO SAUCE HERE.
DURING THESE MASS DISTRIBUTIONS,
EMMAÜS CONNECT DELIVERS TECH
GEAR TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST,
WHILE BUILDING A MORE RESPONSIBLE
AND INCLUSIVE DIGITAL WORLD.**

Across France, Emmaüs Connect runs XXL-scale distributions of refurbished IT equipment. Students without laptops, families cut off from the digital world, low-income households — everyone can come and leave with devices tailored to their needs.

Behind every screen handed out, the system hums like clockwork: donor companies, refurbishers, and volunteers coordinate so that each recipient not only walks away with a working device but also the know-how to use it. A twist on the model: companies donating gear can also get hands-on, sending employees to help on-site. From giving to getting involved, employees meet the people they support, and the results hit instantly.

For Emmaüs Connect, these distributions aren't just logistical feats. They are highly visible moments that spark collective engagement and raise awareness about digital inclusion. Today, these events are spreading across France through local branches, all with the same energy, the same method, and the same goal: making digital access a common, human-centred good.

⇒ THE SECRET SAUCE ⇐

Emmaüs Connect doesn't just "stock the shelves." It mobilises an entire ecosystem so each distribution becomes a replicable event, where social connection and digital inclusion move forward together.

★ STEAL THIS IDEA ★

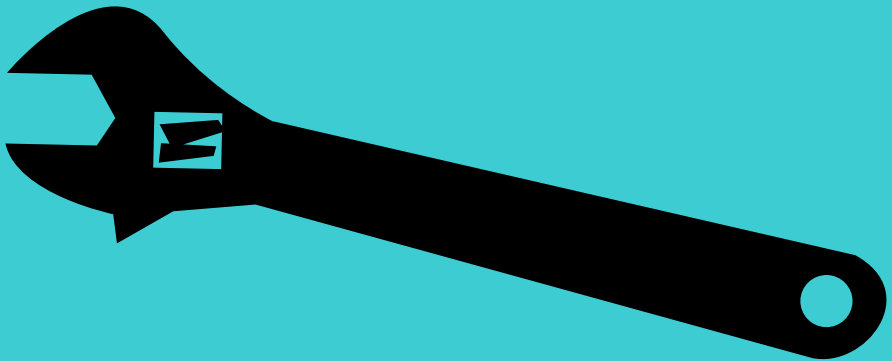
- ➔ Identify a concrete local need before launching the operation.
- ➔ Get company employees involved on the ground.
- ➔ Organise high-impact, repeatable distribution events.

👁️ ALSO WORTH A LOOK 👁️

Digital for Youth (Belgium)

In Belgium, Digital for Youth collects and refurbishes laptops before distributing them to young people who need them most, helping them keep up at school and beyond. From supporting disadvantaged students to equipping young Ukrainian refugees, the initiative turns donated tech into a direct investment in the next generation.

WORKSHOPS THAT MAKE THINGS CLICK



AT COURT-CIRCLIC, DIGITAL DEVICES
ARE MORE THAN MACHINES.
THEY'RE GATEWAYS. EACH REFURBISHED
COMPUTER OPENS THE DOOR
TO SKILLS, CONFIDENCE, AND TRUE
DIGITAL INDEPENDENCE.

The key to true digital inclusion is hands-on experience. That's why Court-Circlic, led by Coll.in (COLLECTif pour l'Inclusion Numérique) in Occitanie, runs repair and reuse workshops directly within social structures. Students, families, and digitally excluded users participate in two half-day sessions to diagnose, repair, and walk away with a fully functional computer. Even more importantly, they gain new skills. Cleaning a virus, replacing a part, or reconnecting a cable becomes an act of empowerment, changing how participants relate to technology and their own autonomy.

The programme follows a full-cycle approach. Computers are collected from individuals, companies, and associations. Data is securely wiped, machines are tested and prepared, and then they are handed over to participants ready to use them.

At the heart of the initiative is the training of Court-Circlic facilitators. Each is equipped to lead workshops and sustain the model over time. Teaching guides and tools are shared under Creative Commons, making it easy for other communities to adopt and replicate the programme. The goal is to build local ecosystems around digital equipment and inclusion while giving participants the power to act for themselves.

➤ THE SECRET SAUCE ⇐

Court-Circlic's magic lies in its mix of practical ecology and civic empowerment. By repairing their own tools, participants reshape their relationship with technology and gain autonomy. The model is designed to be replicable, with freely available educational resources so other regions can take the idea and run with it.

★ STEAL THIS IDEA ★

- ➔ Involve beneficiaries in repair
- ➔ Train facilitators to run a lasting ecosystem
- ➔ Share all resources openly so the programme can be adopted anywhere

👁 ALSO WORTH A LOOK 👁

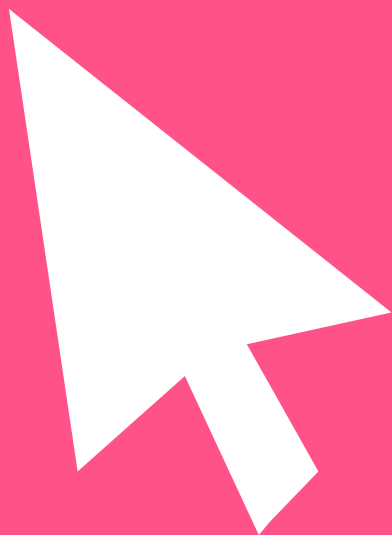
iFixIT (USA, Europe and beyond)

iFixIT offers free, wiki-style repair guides for computers, laptops, and smartphones, widely used around the world. European communities tap into the platform to run workshops, adapt tutorials for classrooms, and empower people to fix their own devices.

Free Software Foundation Workshops (Europe)

Across Europe, workshops from the Free Software Foundation show people how to extend the life of their smartphones using free and open-source software. It's practical, empowering, and a smart way to fight e-waste.

AFTERWORD



For a year, we travelled across Europe to observe solidarity-based digital reuse in action. We met associations, collectives and grassroots actors turning surplus into resources and constraints into opportunities. We saw practices that inspire, initiatives that work, and ideas that challenge our assumptions.

This white paper is the result of that attentive journey: a living map of a European digital reuse movement in the making, where every unused device can become a bridge toward inclusion.

Everywhere, the same scene plays out. On one side, companies, public institutions and individuals continue to buy new equipment at ever shorter cycles, with devastating social and environmental impacts.

On the other, millions of people remain digitally excluded, lacking the basic tools needed to learn, work or access public services.

The paradox is striking: there is already enough equipment on Earth for everyone several times over, and yet a large part of the population still lacks the bare minimum. The problem is not the absence of devices, but how they are distributed.

**THE TIME
TO ACT IS
NOW
BUT HOW ?**

★ FIRST ★

We must redirect the surplus of some toward the needs of others.

By channelling excess equipment into solidarity-based reuse networks. Giving machines a second life means choosing cooperation and inclusion over waste. Once restored to use, these objects become tools for access to education, employment and essential services—and, more broadly, vehicles for dignity and participation.

★ IN THE LONGER TERM ★

We need to rethink and rebalance the system as a whole.

By moving beyond the recycling reflex. Historically, electronic waste regulations have prioritised the recovery of components—metals, plastics—over extending device lifespans through repair and reuse. As a result, given the technical and security constraints of official recycling channels, much of this waste still ends up in landfills, informal circuits, or forgotten in private homes. Moving beyond the recycling reflex means unlocking a direct lever to transform dormant objects into tools for inclusion and social connection.

By reducing the flow of new products while improving the intrinsic quality of equipment. Today, the digital sector faces challenges similar to those of the textile industry. Saturated with mountains of low-quality items, it struggles to provide those who need it most with dignified and accessible devices.

At the heart of the responsible digital transition lies the intrinsic quality of the machines themselves. A locked-down device, or one designed to age prematurely, is like a ship with a leaking hull: even if it still floats, it will not take anyone very far.

By contrast, a durable, repairable device with available spare parts becomes the cornerstone of strong and lasting reuse ecosystems.

This white paper is a call to put dormant machines back into circulation. Behind every unused device lies a silent potential: to accompany a citizen from youth into working life and beyond, opening the door to education, employment and civic participation.

The equipment already exists. The challenge now is to organise its circulation and repair. If we succeed, digital technology can become a tangible tool of solidarity—where every machine extended in time tells a story of inclusion and responsibility.

Each device brought back into use helps weave an invisible but powerful network of knowledge, connection and justice across Europe.

**BY THE
WEEEE
FOR
SOLIDARITY
COALITION**

