



Collection and Sales of Second-hand Clothes

Re-use only has environmental benefit when it replaces production of new clothes

Knowledge vs. assumption. When talking about reusing clothes, it is a common ASSUMPTION that when you buy a shirt in a second-hand shop, it replaces the production of a new shirt, thus saving resources and pollution. But we don't KNOW if that's true.

The concept of replacement rate here expresses the extent to which the purchase of a piece of used clothing replaces the purchase, and thus production, of a corresponding new piece. HPP has conducted a study on the replacement rate in Angola, Malawi, and Mozambique. The study taught us among other things that replacement rate depends on whether people have an alternative to buying second-hand. Many people in Africa have no alternative but buy second-hand because that is what is possible. It is 100% reuse; more sustainable it can not be done.

In Europe it is different: not all second-hand purchases are instead of buying new, but are on top; the new clothes are still being bought.

... but there can be other benefits

Buying second-hand clothes in HPP shops should, however, always be strongly encouraged because of another benefit: funds raised for HPP development projects! Whether located in Europe or in Africa, HPP second-hand shops raise funds for HPP development projects, so the customers should be many and they should buy well.

For the sake of all of us

And when a customer in a HPP second-hand shop in Europe considers supplementing her purchase of second-hand with some new clothes, let's take action and gently recommend a change of mind: for the sake of all of us, Europeans and Africans alike, do not buy the new piece but buy another second-hand piece at HPP instead.

