

Extending clothing lifetimes through swapping

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Key issue: Huge footprint clothing

CO2
water
landfills
fertilisers
chemicals
microplastics
sweatshops



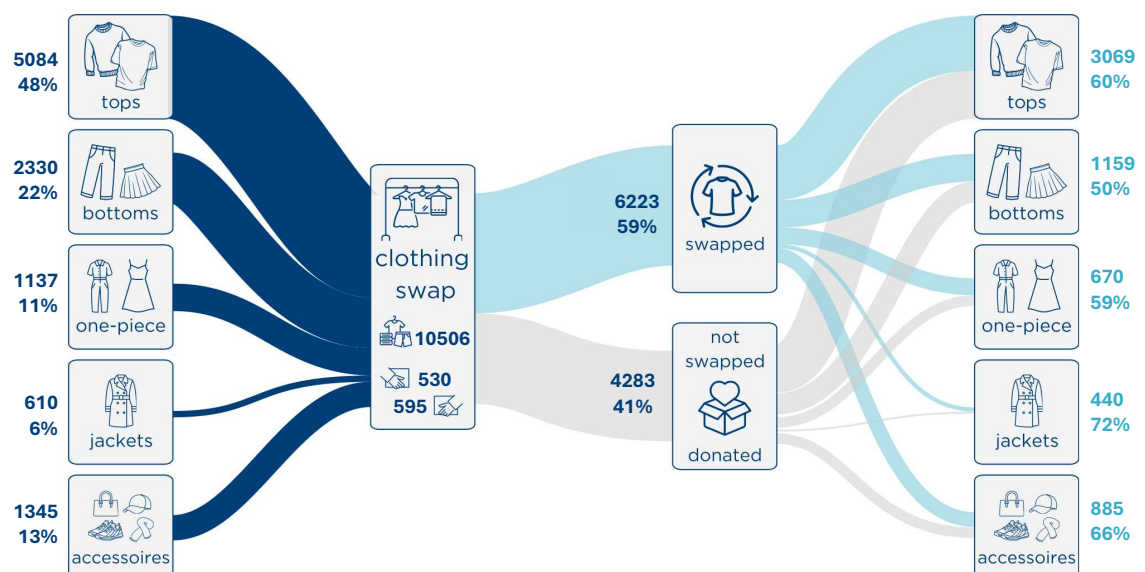
Source: UN Environment Programme (2020). Sustainability and Circularity in the Textile Value Chain - Global Stocktaking.

Focus on consumption phase:
intensified & prolonged use + reduced purchase of new garments → cut production & prevent premature disposal → reduce footprint

Study 1. Mapping garment flows of 3 swap events (> 10.000 garments).

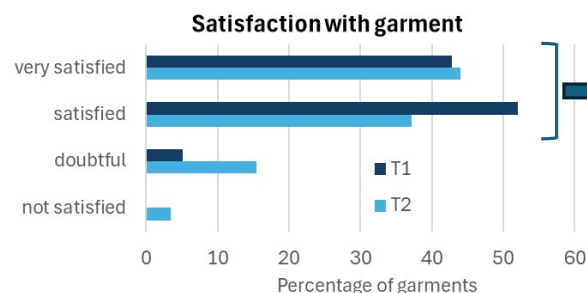


High overall swap rate
59% of all items found a new owner.
All garment types show at least a 50% swap-rate.



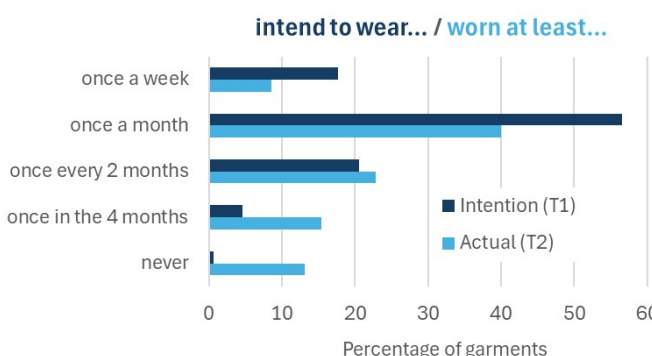
Study 2. To what extent are swapped garments actually worn? A longitudinal study.

70 of 86 female participants interviewed at the swap event (T1) completed an individualized follow-up survey four months later (T2). At T1, participants reported the intended use frequency during the following 4 months of each dress and sweater they acquired for themselves. 4 months later, at T2, they reported their actual use of the garment during that period. Furthermore, satisfaction with each swapped garment was assessed both at T1 and after the four-month use period (T2). In total 175 garments (92 dresses and 83 sweaters) were followed up.



High satisfaction with acquired garments which remains:

T1 = 95%
T2 = 81%



49% worn 4 or more times in the 4 months period.

87% of garments was worn at least once.

People are overly optimistic in their use intentions.

Vermeyen, V., Van De Poel, K., et al. (2025). Duurzame mode begint in de klerkast: waarom ook ons koop- en gebruiksgedrag telt. *Leuvense Economische Standpunten*.

Vermeyen, V., et al. (2025). Garment Reuse in Practice Insights from a Clothing Swap. *PLATE25 - 6th Product Lifetimes and the Environment Conference*.

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