

# The Clothing Loop

*“Communities worldwide, once trapped in the cycle of overconsumption, now have the power to unite and challenge our throwaway culture.”*

Nichon Glerum, CEO & Founder



©Clothing Loop

## The Spark

Clothing Loop was born out of a desire to find sustainable fashion solutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular during the first lockdown in the Netherlands. What started as a response to the growing concerns about textile waste and the environmental impacts of fast fashion quickly evolved into a powerful community-driven initiative. As many people found themselves cleaning out their closets during the pandemic, Clothing Loop provided a creative and eco-friendly way to swap clothes with neighbours.

What began as a pandemic trend has now blossomed into a lasting solution – encouraging people to exchange clothes rather than buy new ones, creating a more circular economy and bringing communities closer together in the process. Through its efforts, the Clothing Loop fosters a **sense of community and connection among participants**. By engaging in this social activity, people not only save money but also strengthen neighbourhood bonds.

## Governance Model

The governance model of Clothing Loop relies on a **decentralised and community-driven approach**. Local “loops” are created in various neighbourhoods, where groups of participants – such as in a neighbourhood in Amsterdam with about 45 members – rotate bags of clothing. Participants can take and keep the clothes they like, donate their own items and pass the bag to the next person in the loop. Loops can be tailored to specific needs, focusing on men’s or women’s clothing, kids’ items, toys, or even hobby tools. By allowing communities to adapt the model to their specific contexts, Clothing Loop promotes community involvement and ensures that the initiative remains relevant and effective.

Participants can easily discover or start local loops (group of people who meet to exchange clothes) and track their swaps through an online platform, while the actual engagement with each other takes place in person. These loops not only simplify logistics but also enable participants to share their experiences and photos, enhancing community interaction. The focus on **collaboration and empowerment** fosters a sense of ownership among participants driving the initiative’s success.

## Social Benefits

Clothing Loop generates social benefits by promoting inclusivity and community engagement. As neighbours come together to exchange clothes, they build relationships and foster a sense of “community”. This social interaction is particularly valuable in urban areas where individuals may feel isolated. By participating in local loops, participants can meet new people, share stories and create a supportive community around sustainable practice.

**26 %**

of participants feel more connected to their neighborhood.



On average a participant will get to know 3 new people.

Source: Clothing Loop, Impact Report 2024

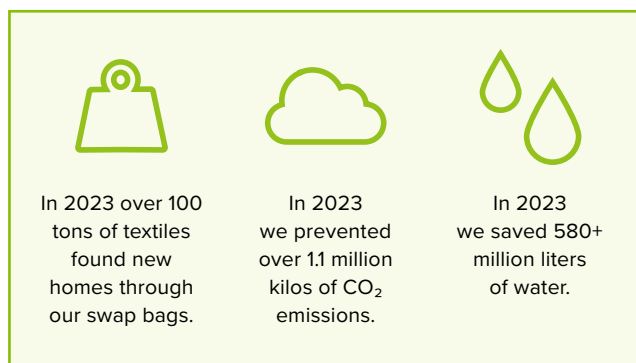


Additionally, the initiative promotes social equity by making fashion accessible to all. Participants can refresh their wardrobes without spending money, making it easier for individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to access quality clothing. This inclusive approach not only reduces financial barriers but also encourages a mindset shift towards valuing quality over quantity in clothing choices.

## Environmental Benefits

Clothing Loop contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing textile waste and promoting a circular economy. By facilitating clothing swaps, the initiative helps divert thousands of kilos of clothing from landfills, thereby minimising the environmental impact associated with textile production and disposal. Each swap effectively extends the life cycle of clothes, reducing the need for new production and the resources associated with its production. Moreover, the initiative raises awareness about the environmental consequences of fast fashion by encouraging participants to consider the sustainability of their clothing choices.

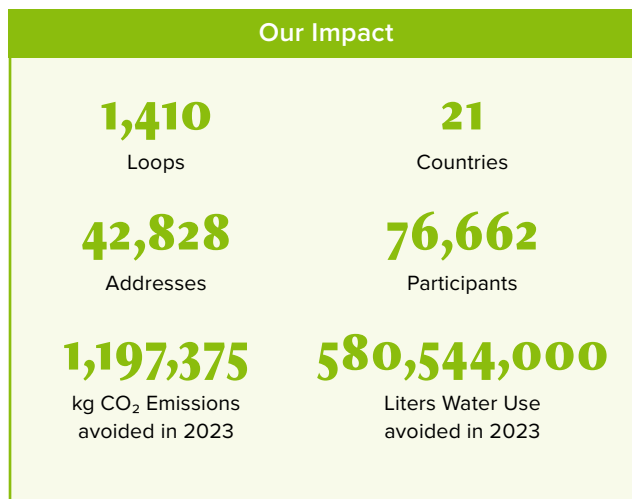
To monitor progress, Clothing Loop is releasing an impact report drawn from survey data gathered from its community members and statistics. According to the latest report, users see this initiative as a chance to promote sustainable consumption, inspire changes in mindset and encourage a reimagining of people's relationship with clothing.<sup>1</sup>



Source: Clothing Loop, Impact Report 2024

## Replicability Potential

Clothing Loop demonstrates a significant replicability potential as shown by its rapid expansion from the Netherlands to other countries and regions (see map below). The model's adaptability allows it to be customised according to local needs and contexts, making it suitable for various urban and rural settings.



Source: <https://www.clothingloop.org/en/>



Funded by  
the European Union

The 3-CO project is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.