

# ReSolutions

How reuse, repair, sharing and Libraries of Things can become everyday choices in Finland, Latvia and Sweden



ReSolutions aims to strengthen reuse, repair, sharing and Libraries of Things across the Central Baltic region. To do that well, the project first needed to understand how people actually perceive these practices in everyday life and what makes participation easier or harder.

People do not reject circular practices by default. They drop out when services feel unclear, inconvenient, risky or too time-consuming. Where services are visible, easy to use and backed by trusted institutions, participation becomes normal and repeatable.

The methodology combines desk research, stakeholder interviews and selected media analysis to bring together policy, practice and public discourse perspectives. This makes it possible to understand not only what circular solutions exist, but also how they are perceived, accessed and supported in real-life contexts. Across all materials, the analysis uses a shared framework focused on barriers, enablers and seven key dimensions that influence circular participation.

## Resources

- Around **60 desk-research sources** across Finland, Latvia, Sweden and a wider international evidence base.
- **34 structured interviews** with citizens, municipalities, waste operators, NGOs, SMEs and service providers across the three project countries.
- **Illustrative media analysis** from Finland and Latvia to understand how circular economy topics are framed in public debate.
- **A common analytical lens** focused on barriers, enablers and seven dimensions: knowledge, behaviour, access, trust, economics, policy and communication.

## Seven dimensions

- **Knowledge and awareness:**  
Do people know what circular options exist and how to use them?
- **Behaviour and social influence:**  
Do habits, norms and identity make circular choices feel normal?
- **Access and convenience:**  
Are services easy to find, reach and use in everyday life?
- **Trust and quality:**  
Do people believe reused, repaired or shared items are safe and reliable?
- **Economic and structural factors:**  
Do price, labour, skills and market conditions support uptake?
- **Policy and regulation:**  
Do rules, mandates and procurement make circularity easier or harder?
- **Communication and engagement:**  
Are people invited into clear, visible and practical action?

# What matter the most

## 1. Circular choices often demand extra work

Across countries, reuse and repair are frequently treated as the 'better' option but not the easier one. They often require more time, travel, coordination, judgement and emotional effort than buying new or throwing items away.

**Why it matters:** This means the challenge is not only behaviour change. It is a service design problem.

## 2. Trust shapes participation as much as price does

People worry about hygiene, quality, safety, hidden defects, liability and what happens if something breaks. These concerns show up in second-hand, repair and borrowing contexts alike.

**Why it matters:** Professional presentation, quality checks, guarantees, clear responsibilities and trusted intermediaries reduce perceived risk.

## 3. Familiar institutions can normalise new practices

Libraries, municipalities and established NGOs matter because they are already trusted, already used and already part of people's routines. That lowers the threshold for trying borrowing, sharing or repair support for the first time.

**Why it matters:** The strongest examples do not ask people to enter a completely new world. They build on places and systems people already know.

## 4. Communication works best when it points to an immediate next step

Abstract messaging about 'circular economy' has limited power on its own. People respond better when communication answers practical questions: What can I do here? What happens next? Is it safe? Is it worth it?

**Why it matters:** Narratives should reduce friction, not add complexity.

## 5. National contexts differ, but the pattern is shared

Finland stands out for public-library potential and the problem of 'consumption work'. Latvia stands out for pathway gaps, uneven municipal capacity and trust deficits. Sweden stands out for strong policy ambition but system-readiness gaps, data issues and procurement-related opportunities.

**Why it matters:** Different starting points require different emphasis, but all three countries benefit from visible, convenient and trustworthy circular pathways.

# Finland

Finland is not short on goodwill. It needs circular services that are easier to find, easier to use and easier to scale beyond local pilots.

## What's happening

- Even highly motivated citizens tend to default to linear options **when reuse or repair requires extra time, travel, coordination, or uncertainty.**
- **Rural service gaps**, limited opening hours, and fragmented service locations repeatedly constrain participation.
- **Friction in service design** – such as unclear processes, multiple steps, or unreliable availability – discourages both first-time and repeat use.

## What enables action

- Circular services work best when they are **easy to access**, predictable, and embedded in everyday routines.
- **Familiar public spaces** – particularly libraries – reduce psychological effort and help normalise participation.
- **Digital support** (clear information, booking systems, reminders, and intermediaries) lowers entry barriers and supports habit formation.

**The desk research** shows a friction problem more than an attitude problem. Reuse and repair are viewed positively, but uptake drops when services are scattered, time-consuming or unclear. A distinctive finding is the role of libraries as ready-made circular infrastructure, alongside the value of regional indicators for scaling beyond pilots.

**Interviews** made those frictions concrete: repair often loses to replacement on price, repair services have disappeared locally, and trust depends heavily on cleanliness, reliability and clear responsibilities. They also surfaced the operational side - staff, storage, repair flows and partnerships – and showed why repair cafés, visible guidance and producer-side obligations matter.

# Latvia

Latvia's biggest challenge is not unwillingness - it is the lack of clear, trusted and easy-to-use participation routes.

## What's happening

- Even motivated citizens tend to default to linear options when reuse, repair, or sharing pathways **are unclear, inconvenient, or perceived as risky**.
- **Uneven infrastructure**, strong urban–rural gaps, and fragmented information repeatedly constrain participation.
- **Trust-related friction** – around safety, hygiene, liability, and quality, especially in peer-to-peer and second-hand contexts – discourages both first-time and repeat use.

## What enables action

- Circular practices gain traction when they are **clearly explained, easy to access**, and supported by trusted intermediaries.
- **Municipal services, NGOs, and organised platforms** act as confidence anchors, reducing uncertainty and perceived risk.
- **Practical guidance, visible local results**, and digital tools that simplify information and logistics lower entry barriers and support sustained engagement.

**The desk research** points to a pathway-and-trust gap. People may agree with circular ideas, but reuse, repair and sharing options are often hard to see, unevenly available and poorly explained, especially outside cities. Municipalities, NGOs and organised platforms emerge as critical confidence anchors.

**Interviews** showed how strongly cost and practicality shape real behaviour. Citizens repair when it clearly saves money; waste actors described how repairable goods are often treated as waste by default; and SMEs stressed warranty, staffing and space problems. NGOs highlighted that hands-on workshops and trusted local spaces often work better than information alone.

# Sweden

Sweden's challenge is less about awareness and more about turning strong ambition into systems that are measurable, trusted and easy to use at scale.

## What's happening

- Even with strong policy ambition and high environmental awareness, uptake slows when **circular concepts are unclear, data is weak**, and responsibilities are fragmented.
- **Organisational risk** aversion, linear routines, and uneven access to reuse and repair infrastructure make circular options harder to operationalise than linear ones.
- **Unclear liability, inconsistent quality assurance**, and limited verification of circular claims reduce trust and discourage scaling beyond pilots.

## What enables action

- Circular practices gain momentum when they are **clearly defined, supported by practical know-how**, and embedded in procurement and everyday organisational routines.
- Shared indicators, reporting frameworks, and **local pilots help translate** policy goals into actionable learning and credible investment decisions.
- **Standards, warranties, intermediaries**, and trusted public institutions reduce risk, strengthen confidence, and support the transition from experimentation to mainstream practice.

**The desk research** shows a more mature policy and business conversation, but the bottleneck is operational readiness. Circularity is slowed by abstract concepts, weak measurement, uneven access and insufficient verification, even where ambition is high. Procurement, standards and data systems stand out as the main levers.

**Interviews** translated those system issues into everyday practice: unclear repair routes, time and distance frictions, space and staffing shortages, and dependence on a few motivated people. They also highlighted what works: professional service environments, integrated hubs, school-based borrowing, strong partnerships and practical storytelling.

## Country comparison across seven dimensions

Dimension	Finland	Sweden	Latvia
<b>Knowledge and Awareness</b>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Public understanding of circular economy is still strongly framed through recycling, with limited awareness of reuse, repair, and Libraries of Things. Key concepts (sharing vs renting, reuse vs waste) are often confused, and services remain poorly visible.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Finland benefits from strong national CE strategies, active piloting (LoTs, reuse reception), and integration of CE into education. Campaigns and demonstrations translate abstract CE ideas into everyday practices.</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Despite high sustainability awareness, CE concepts are often abstract and inconsistently defined across sectors. Data gaps and limited KPI capacity reduce clarity for businesses and municipalities.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Strong research, innovation, and policy ecosystems generate guidance, tools, and best practices.</p> <p><b>“Value Gap” lens</b> strengthens the case for better metrics that capture <i>economic value retention</i> (not only material flows), helping make circularity more measurable and actionable.</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Low literacy on CE and sharing economy concepts, especially beyond urban and educated groups. Confusion around sorting, reuse, and repair options persists.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> NGOs, universities, and EU-funded projects play a major role in awareness-building. Digital platforms and CE indices help clarify rules and make information more accessible.</p>
<b>Behaviour and Social Influence</b>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Ownership norms and convenience-driven habits dominate. Second-hand, shared, or repaired</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Behavioural inertia and risk-averse organisational cultures slow diffusion beyond early adopters.</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Linear buy–use–discard habits remain strong, with low motivation for DIY, repair, or</p>

	<p>goods still face stigma, and rebound effects undermine gains.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Community-based initiatives (repair cafés, LoTs) create pride, joy, and social belonging. Care-based narratives and peer learning gradually normalise reuse and repair.</p>	<p>Linear routines remain embedded in production and consumption.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Strong environmental norms, high trust in public institutions, and active civil society support collective solutions and shared infrastructures.</p>	<p>sharing. Stigma around reused goods persists.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Cost savings, health considerations, and exposure to global sharing platforms gradually increase openness to reuse and sharing practices.</p>
<b>Access and Convenience</b>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Limited geographical coverage of reuse and repair services, especially in rural areas. Inconvenient opening hours and non-digital systems increase perceived effort.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Libraries and municipal facilities act as trusted, central hubs. Simple loan systems and free or low-cost access lower participation thresholds.</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Uneven regional access and logistical challenges (inventory, proximity) limit convenience for reuse and sharing models.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Digital platforms, municipal pilots, and well-developed urban infrastructure improve access and scalability of circular services.</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Sparse infrastructure for reuse, repair, and donation outside major cities; strong urban–rural divide.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Nationwide e-waste systems, expanding collection networks, and digital tools improve convenience and participation.</p>
<b>Trust and Quality</b>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Concerns about hygiene, safety, durability, and liability when borrowing or repairing items. Lack of guarantees reduces confidence.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> High trust in libraries and municipal actors, transparent rules, and positive user experiences</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Unclear liability frameworks and quality assurance for shared or second-hand goods create perceived risk.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Established certification schemes, ecolabels, and strong institutional trust support legitimacy</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Low trust in reused or repaired goods, combined with fears of damage, privacy, and safety in sharing models.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> NGO- and municipality-organised initiatives enjoy higher trust; reputation systems and high</p>

	strengthen confidence and repeat use.	and acceptance of circular solutions.	satisfaction with electronics repair services reinforce confidence.
<b>Economic and Structural</b>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Repair often costs more than replacement; reuse and repair services rely heavily on grants and volunteers.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Repair vouchers, subsidies, and social enterprises improve affordability and local value creation; borrowing reduces household costs.</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Low margins and financing gaps limit scaling of circular business models; secondary material markets remain underdeveloped.</p> <p><b>Value Gap insight:</b> large <i>economic value losses</i> are linked to overconsumption, underutilisation, and premature end-of-life, showing that the core structural challenge is not only waste, but lost value.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Stronger focus on lifetime extension (reuse, repair, refurbishment) and incentive alignment can turn circularity into measurable value retention, supported by improved metrics and investment signals.</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Weak financial incentives and limited funding for repair and reuse; low resource productivity overall.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> EU and national funding (e.g. ALTUM), EPR schemes, and social enterprises support new reuse and upcycling value chains.</p>
<b>Policy and Regulation</b>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Reuse and repair remain weakly embedded in waste legislation; liability rules for sharing are unclear.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> National CE strategies and</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Policy fragmentation and regulatory complexity weaken coherent market signals.</p> <p><b>Value Gap implication:</b> policies need to better address premature end-of-</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Governance still focused on waste management rather than prevention and reuse; risk of missing CE targets.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> CE Action Plan, Waste</p>

	<p>EU Right-to-Repair directives provide legitimacy and long-term direction.</p>	<p>life and enable value retention pathways (repair/reuse/refurbishment) at scale.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Strong alignment with EU CE policy, credible institutions, and space for local experimentation – plus incentives and rules that reward lifetime extension and support consistent measurement of value retained.</p>	<p>Law, mandatory bio-waste collection, and Social Enterprise Law strengthen structural support.</p>
<p><b>Communication and Engagement</b></p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> CE communication often technical and abstract; reuse and repair under-communicated.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Local media, storytelling, visual cues, and participatory campaigns connect CE to everyday life.</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Limited visibility of practical results; abstract messaging for business audiences. Value Gap implication: framing CE as avoiding value loss (not only “being green”) can make the case more concrete for business and households.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> Trusted media, education systems, evidence-based communication, and clearer narratives around value retention amplify engagement.</p>	<p><b>Barriers:</b> Fragmented and poorly rated municipal communication; inconsistent messaging across regions.</p> <p><b>Enablers:</b> NGOs, projects, and digital platforms act as key communicators; benchmarking tools support learning and engagement.</p>

## Next steps in ReSolutions

Based on desk research, interviews, and discourse analysis, ReSolutions will design activities to address common barriers to circular participation across countries. The project focuses on making reuse, repair, sorting, and upcycling more visible, trustworthy, understandable, and easy to engage with in everyday life.

Activity area	Main barrier to address	Narrative direction	Service design implication
<b>Libraries of Things and reuse services</b>	Low visibility, ownership habits, trust concerns, and uncertainty about how borrowing works	Present borrowing and reuse as normal, easy, reliable, and useful in everyday life	Use trusted venues, simple rules, clear catalogues, predictable availability, and low-threshold onboarding
<b>Maintenance and repair services</b>	Repair is often seen as costly, difficult, or uncertain	Frame repair as the normal first step before replacement or recycling	Provide visible support, practical demonstrations, repair events, and clear information on where to go
<b>Sorting and separation of repairable goods</b>	People often do not know what happens after drop-off or whether items still have value	Explain the logic clearly: reuse before recycling, repairable before waste	Create clear handover points, understandable guidance, and feedback on what happens next
<b>Upcycling innovations and workspaces</b>	Upcycling can seem niche unless connected to practical skills and local value	Emphasise creativity, local value creation, and skill-building	Use workshops, maker spaces, and visible examples to connect citizens, SMEs, designers, and local institutions

## Who Can Help Make Circular Choices Easier

Different local actors can support circular participation in practice. From municipalities and libraries to NGOs, SMEs, and waste operators, each audience can help make reuse, repair, and borrowing easier to find, easier to trust, and easier to use.

<b>Audience</b>	<b>What matters most</b>	<b>Useful takeaway</b>
<b>Municipalities</b>	Clear pathways, trusted communication, practical service access	Use local planning, communication channels, and facilities to make circular options easier to find and easier to use.
<b>Libraries</b>	Low-threshold access, trust, familiar routines	Libraries can host or anchor borrowing, workshops, guidance, and circular experimentation without making the service feel niche.
<b>NGOs and community actors</b>	Hands-on engagement, trust-building, local storytelling	Practical events, repair cafés, and real-life examples often do more than abstract campaigns.
<b>SMEs and service providers</b>	Reliable demand, visibility, reduced perceived risk	Clear quality standards, better market signalling, and partnerships help circular services become viable.
<b>Waste operators and reuse actors</b>	Understandable flows, repairable-item pathways, clear responsibilities	People participate more when they know what happens after handover and when usable items are not treated as automatic waste.

*This Activity was conducted within the framework of the project ReSolutions-Innovative solutions to enhance the recycling of goods, number CB0600329, financed by the European Union Interreg Central Baltic programme.*