

Repair Cafés

„Repair Cafés” are places where people come together to repair a variety of items. They have long existed as unofficial community groups, but the modern model was created by Martine Postma in 2009. She organized the first such place in Amsterdam, which was very successful. In 2011, Martine Postma founded a non-profit organization, the Repair Café Foundation, which supports local groups in setting up such repair cafés. Now there are more than 2,000 of them in 35 countries around the world.

Repair cafés provide tools and materials to repair electronics, clothes, bicycles, furniture and other items. Volunteers with a variety of repair skills are always ready to help in any way they can. Many places also offer workshops to learn basic repair skills useful in everyday life, which encourages active participation. These are known as DIY (Do It Yourself) competencies, which refer to the ability to do all sorts of tasks on your own, from home repairs to creating your own projects.

The goal of repair cafés is to strive to extend the “life” of a product by repairing rather than replacing it. Repairing and reusing items reduces the consumption of raw materials, reduces waste production and promotes an environmentally friendly approach to consumption while saving money. It’s an initiative that promotes sustainable lifestyles and environmental awareness in communities around the world.

Repair cafés are meeting places that can operate in various social spaces. In addition to the cafés mentioned in the title, they can also be libraries, churches or community centers. Volunteers, using often their own tools, teach and help repair any items brought in. No appointment is necessary, just bring a broken item and find a volunteer to help breathe “new life” into it. Some “cafés” set aside specialized stations, such as for repairing clothing or electronics. Volunteers will help point out the right workshop for the item.

Even if you don’t have anything to repair, you can visit the “café”, have a drink, help others with repairs or just learn something new about DIY. You can’t always guarantee that the item will be repaired, but the chances of success are high. Some repair cafés boast a repair rate of around 70%. Repair cafés usually have the basic materials needed for repairs, but some items may require special parts that volunteers do not have. In such a situation, they will suggest where to get the part you need, and you can come back later to complete the repair together.

Repair Cafés play an important role in combating the problem of wasted resources and environmental pollution. By repairing broken items, they contribute to reducing waste and extending the life of products. In addition, these social initiatives foster integration and cooperation in local communities, strengthening human ties and solidarity.

Repair Cafés operate around the world, offering their support to local communities in dozens of countries. Thanks to them, more and more people are getting involved in environmentally friendly initiatives while saving money.

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