

The Opportunities and Challenges of Everyday Circularity

INSIGHTS FROM FINLAND & RUSSIA

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ABOUT US

- Circular Citizens project aims to study the motivations, everyday routines and practical strategies of citizens active in circular economy in Finland and Russia.
- We focus on what active citizens are already doing to minimize waste and prolong the life of goods for example through reuse, repair and recycle activities.
- By understanding the practices and challenges of pioneering circular citizens, we gain insights on how to support the transition to a circular economy in different institutional contexts

METHOD

- Semi-structured interviews conducted during 2021 with eco-influencers, bloggers, eco-activists and other citizens, who are already implementing responsible consumption principles relevant to circular economy.

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- FINLAND | 20 interviews; 9 cities, 13 women & 7 men, age ranging from 25 to 76

- RUSSIA | 19 interviews; St. Petersburg, 15 women & 4 men, age ranging from 24 to 41

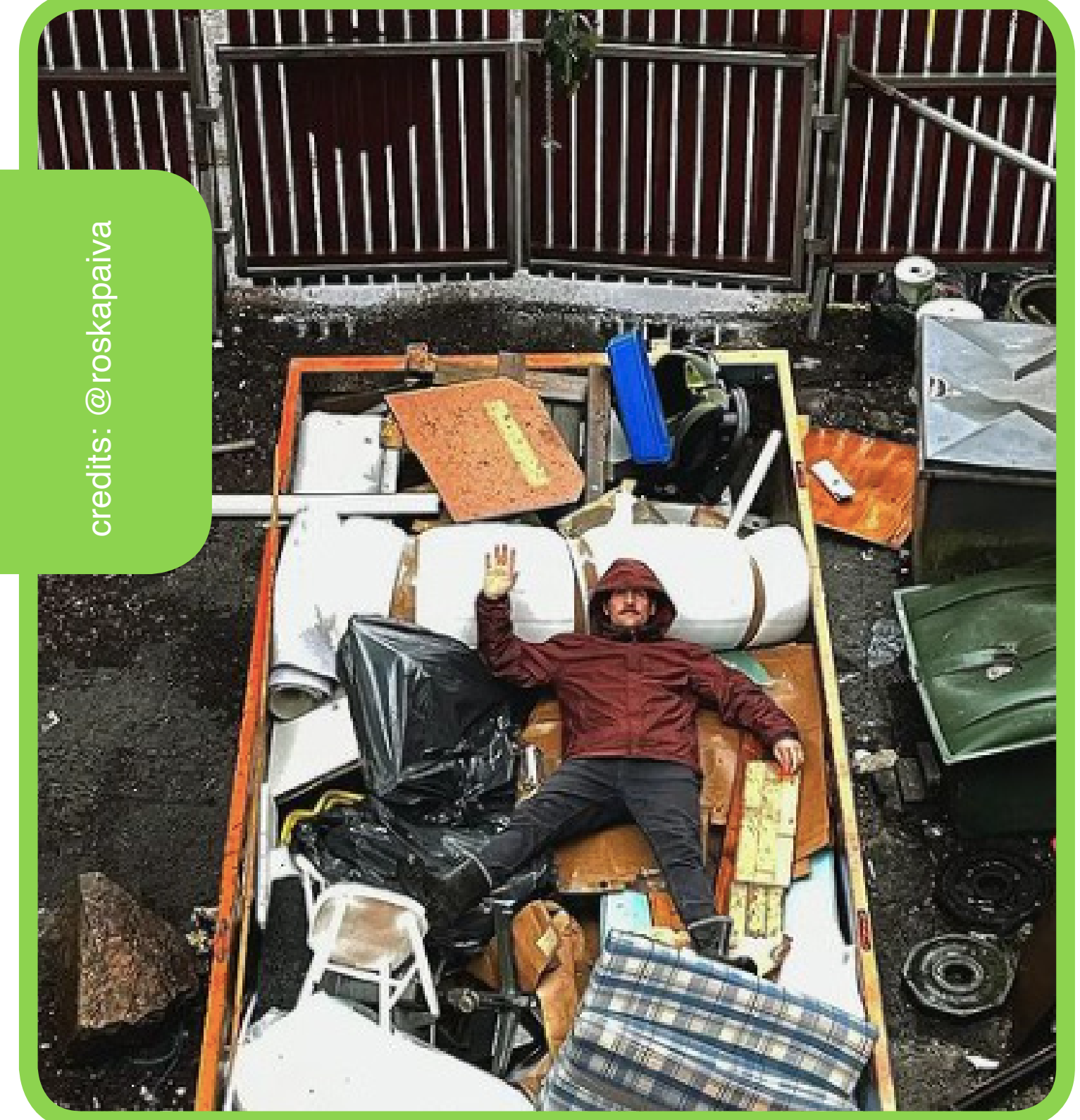
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RESULTS

Challenge: Sustainability communication easily gets boring and moralistic

Education implication: Collaboration with eco-influencers to communicate about circularity in engaging way

While formal sustainability communication can cause guilt, anxiety and boredom, eco-influencers are skillful in creating fun and humorous content that engages. Systematic integration of informal blogger content on sustainability to formal education may catalyze transitions to circular behaviours without moral pressure.



credits: @roskapaiva



credits: @rosablom

Challenge: All household liquid goods in supermarkets are packaged in plastic.

Infrastructure implication: Diversifying the range of conventional shops with re-fill options and alternatives packed in cardboard

Reducing the amount of plastic waste is challenging even for the most motivated citizens. Conventional supermarkets do not provide re-fill options for cleaning liquids, shampoos, etc. Re-filling, getting solid bars of shampoos in cardboard packaging is possible in specialized eco-shops or has to be ordered online. All this requires planning, time and additional effort compared to regular shopping in supermarkets.

Challenge: Renting/ services are invisible for many types of goods

Education implication: Municipal-level support for promoting renting vs ownership

Renting of household appliances, tools, camping gear and clothing are still rare. While these services already exist, citizen awareness regarding the renting option (vs. buying) is very low. Often, platforms that offer renting are small start ups that do not have resources for expensive advertising. Raising citizen awareness of renting and leasing would benefit from explicit municipal support and campaigning.

credits: @palloniemi



credits: Aleksandra Nenko

Challenge: Compressing and storing sorted household waste at home

Infrastructure implication: Designing sorting waste solutions for households with no immediate access to recycling points

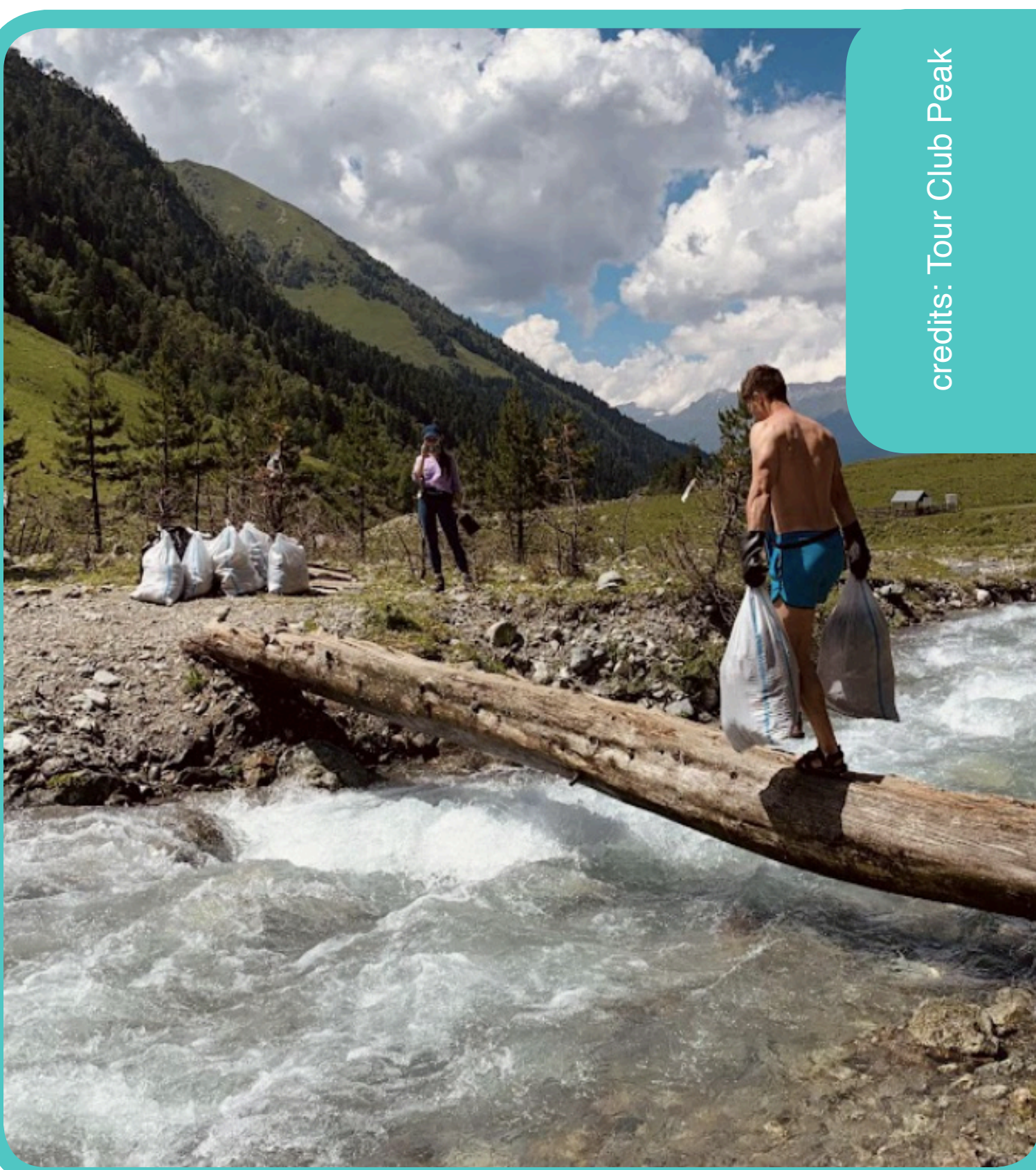
In St. Petersburg, the recycling infrastructure for sorted household waste is in its early development. As recycling points for sorted waste are often located far away, active citizens end up compressing and storing large fractions of sorted waste at home to transport bigger batches to recycling stations at once. Thus, there is interest towards expertise, solutions and services aimed at facilitating waste sorting for citizens.

Challenge: Litter in public spaces in the urban environment

Social interaction implication: Clean ups as interactive gamified activity among youth and/or as part of corporate team building

Organized clean up activities, visits to reuse centers and recycling facilities enable understanding and acceptance among citizens for waste prevention activities. Offering these activities as a service for events and corporate team building is a way to facilitate the formation of new habits and transitioning to circular lifestyles.

credits: Anna Smirnova



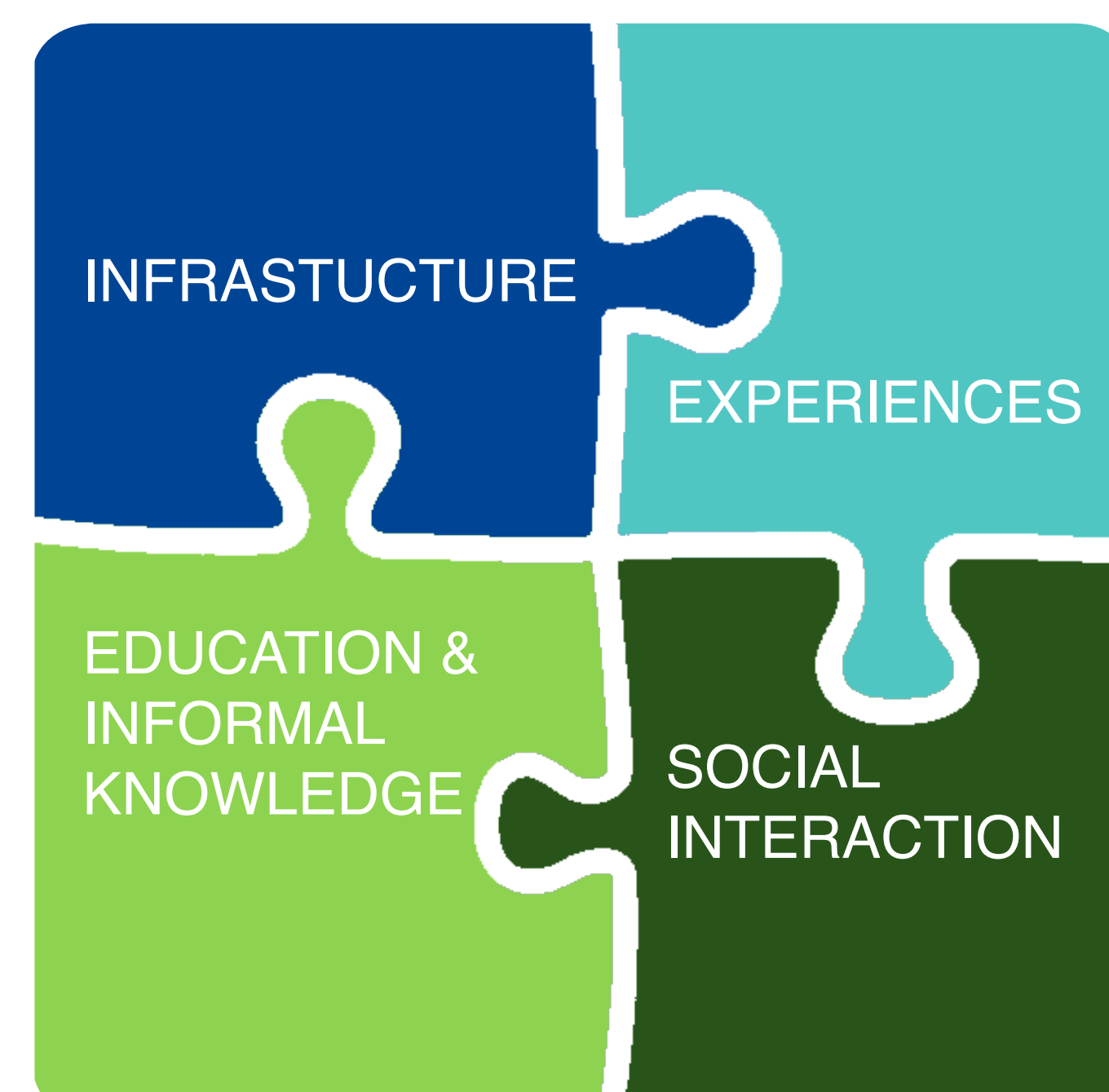
credits: Tour Club Peak

Challenge: Littering in remote nature-based tourist destinations

Experiences implication: Eco-tourism experiences to increase responsible exposure to nature

Organizing activities and trips to beautiful natural destinations enriched with circular and sustainability experiences: clean-ups of litter, waste-free seasonal cooking, skills for working with different materials, repair and maintenance of bicycles and various gear. Developing tourism aimed at acquiring new skills can accelerate circular lifestyles.

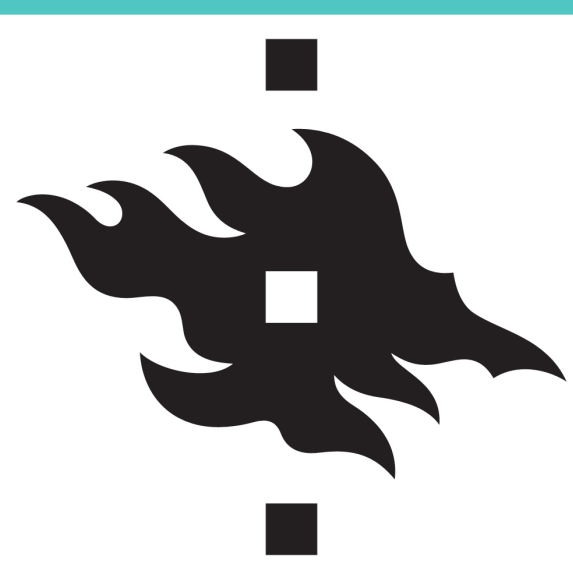
SUMMARY



1. The ABC-theory emphasizes the importance of context (C) over attitudes (A) in guiding sustainable behaviours (B). The more difficult or time-consuming the behaviour—the weaker is attitudinal influence (Guagnano et al., 1995).

2. Everyday circularity is hampered by challenges related to infrastructure, dull information and general lack of awareness, making it difficult for the wider public.

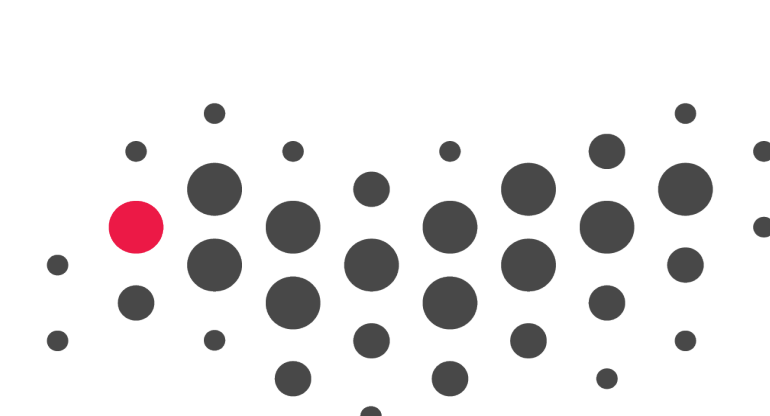
3. Catalyzing circularity calls for integrative approaches: improving infrastructure and changing attitudes and norms via engaging experiences and social interaction.



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