



**Waste not want not: Putting unwanted clothing into good use**  
*by Nazima Versay Kudus*

Chu (2019) reported that Malaysians discarded 195,300 tonnes of fabric waste in 2018; this is equivalent to the weight of 19 Eiffel Towers put together. In 2020, Malaysians generated up to 2,000 tonnes of textile trash and other wearable items every day (Kloth Cares, 2020). Textile waste makes up 4% of Malaysia's municipal solid waste, making it the second greatest polluter after oil and gas (Hassandarvish, 2019). These statistics are alarming considering the effects of fabric pollution and the overflowing of landfills across the country. Instead of simply binning unwanted garments, there are many alternatives that can be opted for a more sustainable environment; you can sell, donate, swap, rent, recycle or upcycle them.

**Selling**

A money-making method is to sell clothing to offline stores like Refash at Sungei Wang Plaza. Refash offers higher payouts for clothes when they have no signs of wear and defects and are in trend. Payout value is determined by all of the following factors: brand, trend, condition, material, popularity, and kind of clothes. At Refash, items are categorised into three tiers. Tier A comprises items manufactured within a year by designer/local brands such as TinselRack, The Editor's Market, mds, Love Bonito, Runway Bandits, fayth and TheClosetLover. Tier B are items from mall brands, for instance, Forever 21, H&M, Pull & Bear, Zalora, Zara, TopShop and Cotton-On, manufactured within 1-5 years. Items categorised in Tier C consist of those without brand, low in popularity but still in good condition, manufactured from 1-10 years (Clean Out Your Closet With Refash, n.d.).

Pre-loved clothes are also sold on social media such as Facebook and online stores like Carousell. One can join Second Hand Clothing Sale on Facebook where second hand clothes can be sold or bought (Second Hand Clothing Sale, n.d.). In Carousell, there is a "Make Offer" button where buyers can negotiate on prices. Carousell also has a "Rating" system where buyers and sellers can leave reviews for one another (How do I buy on Carousell? n.d.)

**Donating**

Clothes which are still good to use but do not fetch a price when sold, such as everyday wear like school uniforms

and T-shirts are best given away to the poor, needy or homeless. The general ethics when donating is to make sure the garments are not torn, worn-out, or soiled, and also, they are free from bad smell. At UiTM CPP, free markets are ways that the university community gives away unwanted clothes to those in the B40 income classification.

However, when donating to thrift or value shops, it is best to donate items that have selling points. Thrift store items are those that have been used and loved by the previous owner, but they are usually still in good shape and can be useful to a new owner. The Women Centre for Change Value Shop accepts donations of pre-owned clothes. Proceeds from the sales are channeled back into the NGO's mission in helping women and children who are abused, raped or sexually assaulted (WCC Value Shop, 2020).

**Swapping**

Swapping clothes is a great way to have fun with style and clothes. Events such as Clothes Swap @ Penang Earth Day 2022 encourage people to collect and exchange good-quality used clothing (Clothes Swap @ Penang Earth Day 2022, n.d.). You not only give a second life to your pre-loved clothes but also make new friends along the way.

**Renting**

Renting is a way to go when you know that you will only wear the clothes on one-off occasions like a wedding, graduation and costume or fancy dress party. When Carrie Symonds married Boris Johnson, she even rented her



*The author donating clothes to WCC Value Shop*

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wedding dress from a website. A local online dress rental service, Lylamod offers a selection of dresses for women and girls to rent (Lyamod, 2022). Customers can choose over a hundred pieces of dresses that are advertised on its website. This makes shopping not only easier but also reduces the need to spend a hefty amount on a dress and it also reduces closet space, especially when hanging a wedding gown.

### Reusing

Old tees can be reused as rags for cleaning purposes. Using rags saves money on paper towels and is more environmentally friendly. Old blankets and towels can be donated to local animal shelters. Old blankets keep the animals nice and warm while towels can be used as wipes. Animal shelters such as 4Paws accepts donations of such items (Donate, n.d.).

### Recycling

One way to recycle fabric is to send them to Kloth Care. Kloth Care is a social entrepreneurship initiative that keeps fabric and textile waste from being disposed of in landfills. If you have unwanted fabric and do not know what to do with it, simply drop them off in the various recycling stations in Klang Valley. This recycling movement would do the following - rethink, reduce, reuse, repurpose and recycle for you.

### Upcycling

Upcycling or also termed as repurposed clothing is to take a clothing that is no longer fit, old, worn out, stained or damaged and refashion it into a new product. Hashadi, for instance, repurpose everyday items namely T-shirts, trousers, batiks, and skirts into different types of bags such as tote, pouches and lunch bags (Pong, n.d.).

The above methods have exemplified ways of channeling your unwanted clothing. Hence, from now on, think twice before simply discarding them into the dustbin.

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