

What is upcycling?

"To create from what was discarded"
– that is the aim of upcycling.

Upcycling means giving a new function to discarded or used materials, while putting great emphasis on visual appeal or aesthetics, and maintaining or enhancing the quality and value of the material.

Recycling vs. Upcycling

While recycling and upcycling both aim to turn discarded materials into something that can be useful once more, upcycling really is about reviving otherwise unwanted objects to increase their worth and quality. Also, when one upcycles, he moves repurposed materials "up" the supply chain. Meanwhile, when one recycles, he simply reuses the materials in a similar (if not the same) manner he did last time.

For example, recycling glass soda bottles would pertain to disinfecting the bottles for a new batch of soda, melting the glass bottles to produce new ones, or using the glass bottles as containers for other liquid materials for small-scale retail such a cooking oil, vinegar, soy sauce and the like or gasoline, kerosene, among others.

Upcycling glass soda bottles, on the other hand, would mean creating ashtrays, saucers, or glass cups from cut or distorted glass soda bottles. The soda bottles can also be cut to make table or hanging candleholders or light fixtures.



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How much waste is dumped in the Marilao-Meycauayan-Obando River System?

Upcycling can greatly help in reducing solid waste. Right now, there are a lot of solid waste materials out there.

Consider the following:

Marilao



Marilao collects up to 70 kg (0.07 ton) of solid waste daily from the river and 120 kg (0.13 ton) of solid waste during the rainy season.

The solid waste is collected from the city's three river trash traps daily. While this waste is collected in Marilao, the river current brings most of the waste to Marilao from nearby areas.

Source: Municipal Planning and Development Office

Meycauayan



40-45 tons – this is the city's daily residual waste volume collected from the 26 barangays. Residual waste refers to waste from households—that which has not been segregated or sent for reprocessing and is transported to landfills or dumpsites.

Source: City Environment and Natural Resources Office

Valenzuela



From January to September 2013, Valenzuela recorded a total solid waste volume of 636 cubic meters (about 224 tons). This is composed of wastes collected from the creeks that flow into Tulyahan and Meycauayan Rivers.

To prevent residual waste from reaching and further polluting its two river systems, Valenzuela collects waste carried into the creeks from areas outside Meycauayan.

Source: City Environment and Natural Resources Office



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What are the benefits of upcycling?



1. Helps reduce solid waste collected in your community (Environmental)

Upcycling helps lessen the amount of discarded materials or waste in your community. By upcycling discarded materials, you turn what would have been considered waste into an innovative product borne out of your creativity and concern for the environment. Plus, you're creating a material that would be useful to your family and other members of the community.



2. Helps you earn additional income (Financial)

Upcycled products are in demand and are well received by consumers. From accessories, such as earrings and necklaces to decorative details, furniture, and even housing materials, upcycled products are gaining a bigger market in the country.

It feels good to buy upcycled products as they are the result of smart product development with great regard for the environment and the future.



3. Taps into your creativity and helps you share it with your community (Social)

Look around your community and see what materials are usually thrown away. Whether they be old tires, newspapers, magazines, or tarpaulin posters, there is always a way to upcycle these materials.

Filipinos are among the most resourceful and creative people. Upcycling is an activity that'll help members of the community tap into their inner creativity while strengthening their sense of community and connectedness.

Start working on those upcycling ideas with your family, friends, and classmates!

Together, you can help reduce waste in your communities!



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What materials can be upcycled?

Magazines and newspapers

Rolled newspapers and magazines could be made into bags and accessories – earrings, necklace, and bracelets.

Rolled newspapers can also be used for wall finishing and frame covering.



Old rubber tires

Rubber from old tires could be converted into flower pots, chairs, and floor mats.



Glass bottles

Glass bottles could be made into ashtrays, saucers, or glass cups. Soda/wine bottles could also be cut to make table or hanging candleholders or light fixtures.



Tarpaulin posters

Bags could be made from old tarpaulin posters.



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What upcycling enterprises have been initiated in the Philippines?



Shoreline Kabalikat sa Kaulanan, Inc.

Part of the income of households come from making earrings, bracelets, and necklaces from used magazines.

Lumago Designs

lumagodesigns.com

This company makes jewelry out of recycled and upcycled materials; these are made and designed by the women living around the dumpsite in Dumaguete, Philippines.



Siklo Pilipinas

bolooka.com/siklo

This enterprise makes upcycled footwear and bags, among others.



Tribu Upcycle

This company creates footwear from old rubber tires.

Taclob

<https://www.facebook.com/taclob.ph>

Here, survivors of Typhoon Haiyan handcraft backpacks with upcycled materials like tarpaulin, denim, and other materials.



Camarines Sur Watersports Complex

makes use of old container vans or shipping containers for housing accommodations.



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