THE CITIZEN

RECYCLE

OLD CLOTHES

WHEN SHOPPING

FOR NEW

Recycling not only gives clothes a second life in developing countries; it also saves resources and energy used in making new garments. Now you can recycle while shopping and gain benefits, too.

THE SOLUTION

Give unwanted clothes a second life – you’ll keep usable garments from landfills and save valuable resources. British retailer Marks & Spencer has joined forces with Oxfam. They want to make clothes recycling as commonplace as recycling bottles and cans. How do they propose to do that? Get people “shwopping.” The idea is to get customers into the habit of recycling while shopping. Participating customers take part in competitions and receive store credits.

The shwopped clothes are given to Oxfam to resell online, in their stores or in international markets. What they don’t sell is recycled – high-quality material can be turned into new fabric; low-quality will be used for other purposes.

WHY A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION?

According to Marks & Spencer, 16 clothing items per person are sent to landfills each year in the UK.

ECONOMIC

In the four years M&S has worked on clothes recycling with Oxfam, over 10 million items worth an estimated $12.3 million have been donated.

SOCIAL

The shwopping campaign increases awareness of recycling of clothing and engages people in changing behavior.

ENVIRONMENTAL

According to M&S, around 1 billion pieces of clothing are sent to landfills in the UK each year. Non-recycled clothing has a very short lifespan and could potentially be turned into new raw materials or reused by someone else. The goal of the shwopping campaign is to collect as much clothes as M&S sells in a year – 350 million pieces.