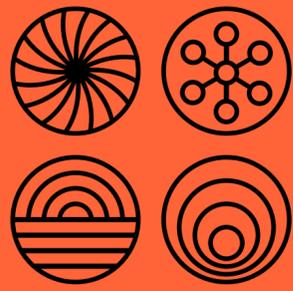


FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

CASE STUDY:
NUW





CASE STUDY

NUW

Founder/Owner Aisling Byrne, CEO
(originally with Ali Kelly)
Type Peer-to-peer clothes sharing
and swapping platform + app
Sector Womenswear/Collaborative
consumption
Established 2019
Location London (founded in Dublin)
Size Micro
Website thenuwardrobe.com

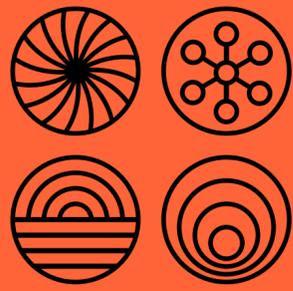
"Nuw is a social network for sharing clothes, so that the products can circulate locally, but we want the idea and concept to scan globally."

"It's a really positive movement towards not feeling the need to own things any more, but getting to enjoy them."

"What we're looking for is behaviour change. And we'd argue that rental is behaviour change, because nobody pays their friend to borrow their dress, but people will casually walk into their friend's wardrobe and borrow something for a wedding."

NUW





CASE STUDY: NUW

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Extending the use-life of clothes through enabling clothes-sharing communities, initially at a local (or hyperlocal) level.

Disrupting fashion and changing fashion habits by modelling the natural behaviour of sharing amongst friends - borrowing, lending and swapping pieces from individual wardrobes.

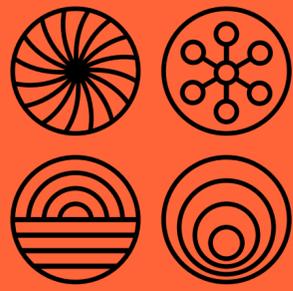
Aiming to make sharing and swapping a widely accepted practice.

Working closely with user communities to understand their sustainability attitudes, clothing practices, preferences and needs.

During COVID-19, swapping of clothes has become the major function of Nuw., representing 80% of its activity.



Image: Nuw



OVERVIEW



Nuw is a peer-to-peer clothes sharing and swapping platform and app, co-founded in Dublin by Aisling Byrne and Ali Kelly in 2015. It aims to increase the wear rate of garments by encouraging people to share their wardrobe with others, initially on a local basis. The first subscription-based platform of its kind, the concept was initially built and tested with a community of university students who could not afford to spend much on clothes, particularly for special occasions.

Aisling and Ali were inspired to act for change following a visit to India organised by an NGO. Here, they saw first-hand the horrific exploitation and human and environmental impacts caused by the fashion industry. Aisling and Ali used to swap clothes while at university and they recognised that the most sustainable fashion activity was using the clothes you already have. So they set up swap shops and events and then built a basic sharing platform through their university and friends' networks.

All the time they were building the platform, they worked collaboratively with their community to understand their attitudes and needs, and to listen to their ideas. They aim to educate their members via the platform with their carbon-, waste- and water-impact calculator, built in collaboration with the London Waste and Recycling Board. Users can upload their pieces with information on the materials content

and see the average savings in carbon and water gained by sharing and not buying new.

The business is constantly gathering information from its users on their attitudes towards sustainability, representation and diversity, and their behaviour and experiences. This provides valuable insights into the continued development of the platform.

Aisling believes Nuw advocates that the sharing model is better than a rental business, which requires inventory and warehousing. The lower price point, compared to rental platforms, enables them to make sustainable fashion more inclusive and accessible.

"We want to collect the story of where these pieces go, if they go on adventures. We want to instil in people that we have this responsibility to give our pieces a fulfilled life. If we can't do it individually, we can do it collectively. We want people to be really proud if they're wearing things that have been worn before."

NUW

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With special thanks to the many Fostering Sustainable Practices project partners, participants and Advisory Board members.

Design by: Studio LP

The Fostering Sustainable Practices project investigates creative practices in design-led fashion micro and small enterprises (MSEs) as an evidence base for change towards a more sustainable fashion industry. Project findings are underpinned by two-and-a half years of work with more than forty fashion MSEs, who demonstrate sustainable prosperity in and through Fashion.

This collaborative research is led by Centre for Sustainable Fashion, a University of the Arts London research centre, based at London College of Fashion. Project partners are based at London College of Fashion, The Open University and Middlesex University's Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research (CEEDR; a partner in Surrey University's Centre for Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity).

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