

Circular Material Valuer

Course Programme

This document describes the Circular Material Valuer, a 15-week project-based course programme designed to equip individuals and organizations with the skills and mindset needed to divert valuable goods from the waste stream. It combines theoretical learning with hands-on, reflective activities to foster a holistic understanding of material reuse from a critical, ground-level perspective.

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The programme has four modules, each designed to build upon the last, culminating in a comprehensive understanding of the Circular Material Valuer's role.



Module 1





Systemic View and Social Value

This module provides the foundational knowledge for trainees, enabling them to critically understand the circular economy and its social-ecological implications. It challenges traditional notions of waste and linear production, promoting a more equitable and sustainable interaction with materials, and framing local actions as vital systemic interventions.

Module Length: 4 weeks (2-3 hours per week)



Core Competencies

 Critical Thinking	Analysing mainstream discourse on product design, manufacturing, waste management and circular economy, identifying potentialities and shortcomings on these topics in relation to local systems for material reuse.
 Ethical Framing	Shifting from a passive "abundance" mindset to an intentional "generosity" mindset.
 Systems Mapping	Visualising local and regional material flows, stakeholder networks, and communication channels.
 Community Engagement	Understanding, engaging with, and leveraging existing social groups and initiatives.

Methods



Theoretical Sessions

Introduce key concepts like the waste hierarchy, bioregions, and the critiques of top-down circularity. Use readings and videos to spark discussion. The *agent valoriste* role in the French context will be introduced as a professional model in the social and solidarity economy.

Participatory Workshops

Use generative questions to facilitate group discussions on local challenges and opportunities for waste prevention. Map stakeholders, resources, and material flows in a chosen locality.

Case Studies

Examine successful and unsuccessful initiatives in local and global contexts, such as community repair cafés, scrap shops like The Remakery, or historical models like the SERO System in East Germany.

Assignments



Main Module Outcome

Local Reuse Plan

Start developing a community-oriented project to promote or increase material reuse with a focus on supporting urban generosity, generating exchange among local stakeholders, promoting community education, and producing social-environmental value.

Module Resources



Readings

- Schröder, Patrick, et al. *Circular Economy and the Global South*.
- Schmidt Fonseca, Felipe. *Thesis title: Generous cities – weaving commons-oriented systems for the reuse of excess materials in urban contexts*. Doctoral Thesis. Zenodo. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15263864>.
- Clark, Liesl, and Rockefeller, Rebecca. *The Buy Nothing, Get Everything Plan*.
- Thackara, John. *How to Thrive in the Next Economy*.
- Shannon Mattern, *Maintenance and Care*. In: Places Journal, November 2018. Accessed 08 Aug 2025. <https://doi.org/10.22269/181120>
- Translated Articles from French websites on the agent valoriste role.

Videos

- Furtado, Jorge. *Ilha das Flores*.
- Walker, Lucy, et al. *Waste Land*.
- "L'agent valoriste - un métier de l'économie circulaire" on YouTube.



Module 2

Eyes and Hands of a Circular Valuer

This module is dedicated to developing the practical and embodied skills necessary for a material valuer, from initial assessment to hands-on intervention.

Module Length: 3 weeks (3-4 hours per week)



Core Competencies



Material Assessment

Performing inspections of objects in visual, manual, functional, and socio-environmental terms.



Repair and Upcycling

Executing simple hands-on repairs and creative transformations.



Resourcefulness

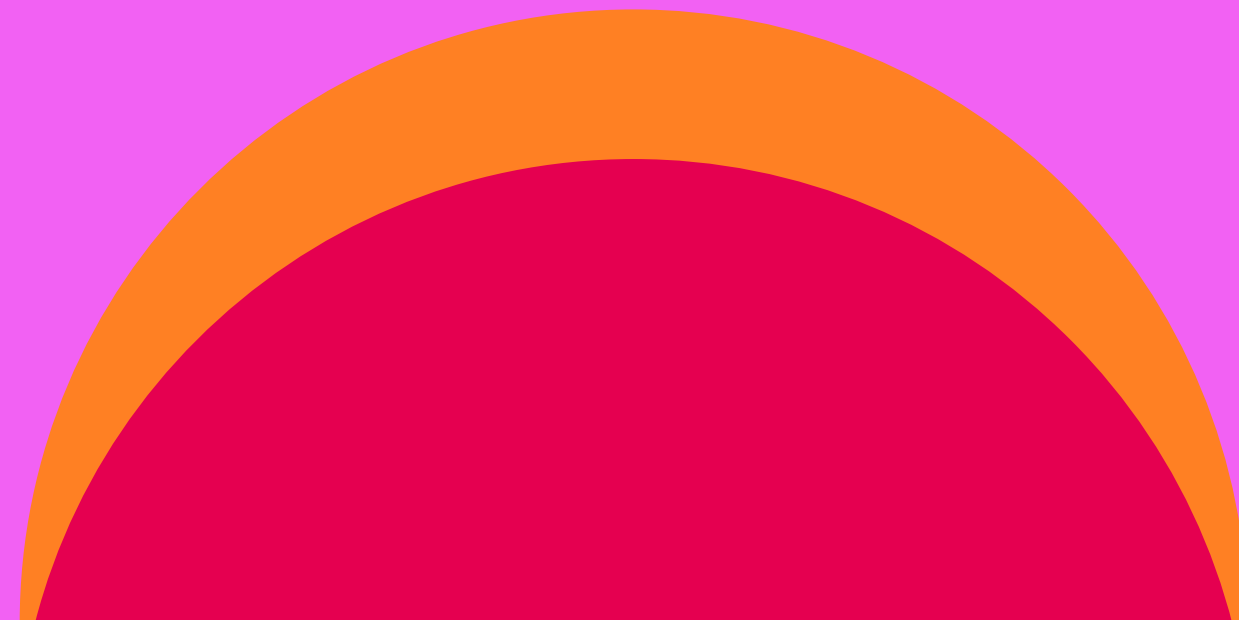
Using basic tools and available materials to solve problems.



Design Literacy

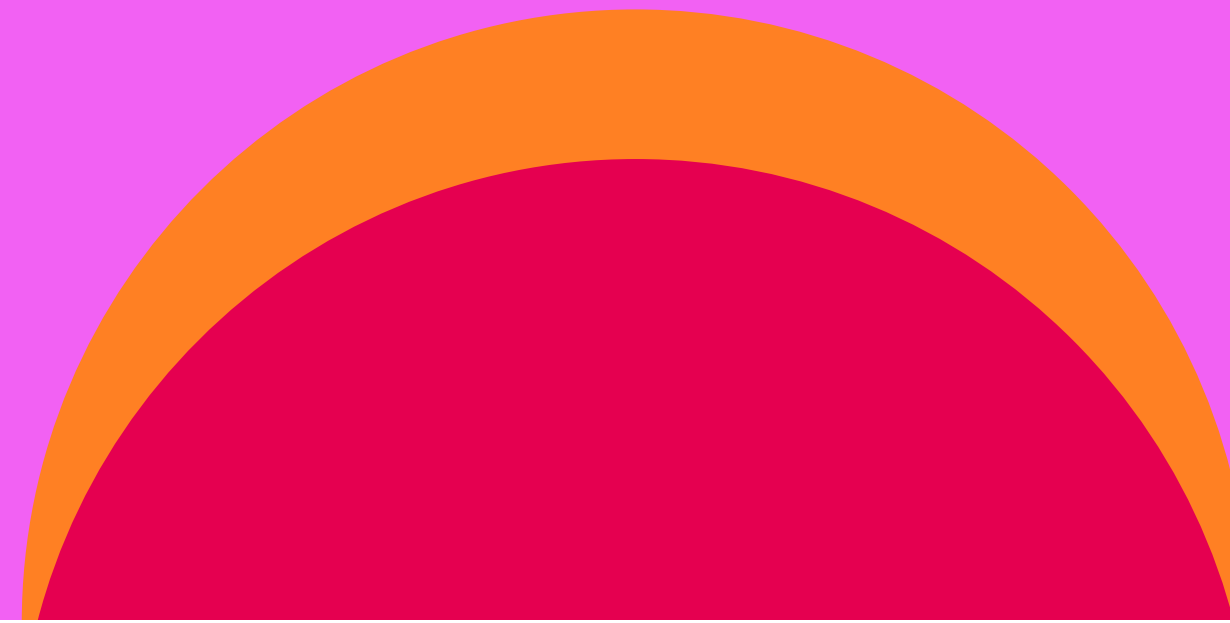
Analysing product design for durability, reparability, and obsolescence.

Methods



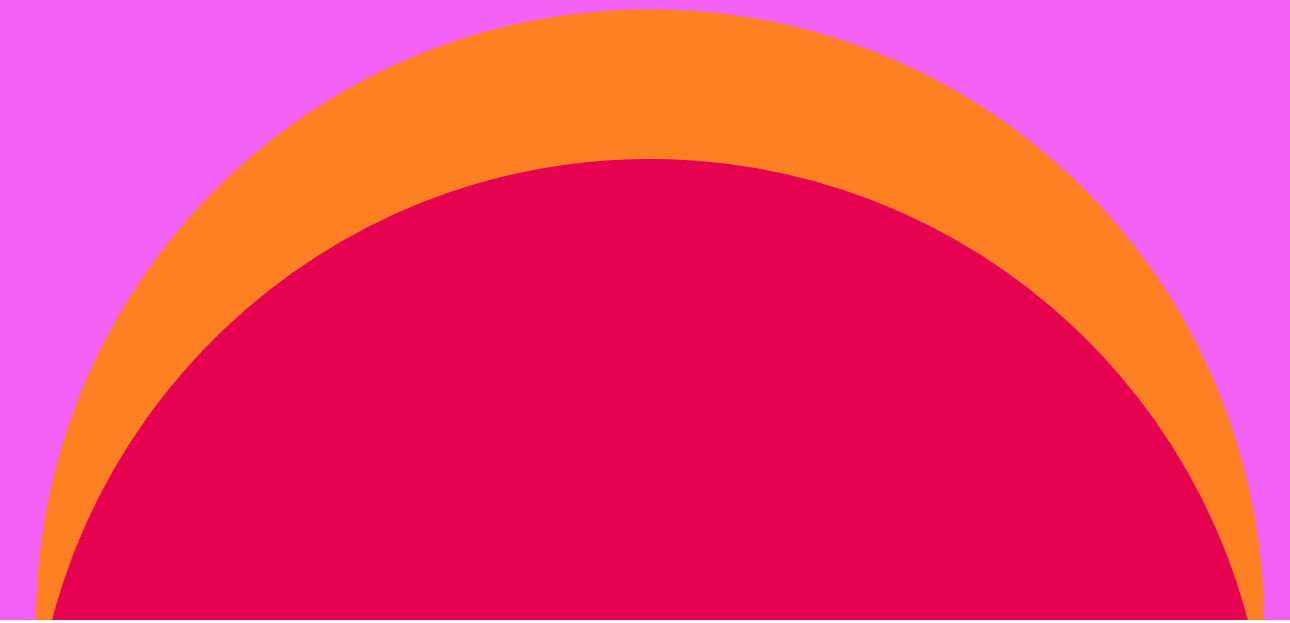
Hands-on Labs

Conduct workshops focused on disassembling and assessing different products (e.g., a broken electronic device, a worn-out piece of furniture) - inspired by embodied approaches to learning through practical work.



Skill-Sharing Sessions

Invite a craftsperson, a professional repairer, or a seasoned upcycler to lead a practical session, embodying models of learning inspired by “master and apprentice” modes, “peer learning”, and “tactile education”.



Materiality Experiments

Work with a single type of waste material (e.g., discarded wood, plastic bottles) exploring its properties and potential for transformation through minimal intervention.

Assignments



1

Repair Diary

Participants choose a broken or unwanted object and document their repair or upcycling journey, including attempts, failures, and discoveries, using photos or sketches. This reflects a core methodology of the initial research phase.



2

The "Reshape" Project

Apply the "Reshape strategy" to an item of industrial waste, transforming its function, form, or composition into a new product.



3

Toolkit Development

Create a small "tool kit" of simple, multi-purpose tools and document their use for various repair and upcycling tasks.

Main Module Outcome

Material Guide

Create a guidebook with recommendations on how to assess the value of goods available locally for reuse. Document relevant characteristics - material properties, typical operations needed, seasonal demand and others.

Module Resources



Readings

- Sennett, Richard. *The Craftsman*.
- Jackson, Steven J. *Rethinking Repair*.
- Nemer, David. *Technology of the Oppressed*.
- Sander, N., et al. "Introducing the Reshape strategy: Preserving material integrity." *6th PLATE Conference 2025*.

Videos

- Hunkin, Tim. *The Secret Life of Components*.
- Oroza, Ernesto. "Technological Disobedience".
- "Free Universal Construction Kit".



Module 3





Information Systems and Economic Value

This module focuses on the economic and data-driven aspects of material reuse, training participants to use available resources and develop sustainable business models.

Module Length: 3 weeks (2-3 hours per week)



Core Competencies

 Data Literacy	Collecting, analysing, and contributing to open data about reuse.
 Economic Valuation	Assessing market value and social value, identifying market gaps, and creating viable solidarity-oriented business models.
 Logistics and Storage	Managing material flows, inventories, and storage solutions.
 Policy Advocacy	Understanding incentive systems and advocating for supportive policies.

Methods



Online Research Labs

Use online marketplaces and databases to research the market characteristics of different materials and products. Explore tools online second-hand marketplaces for information on pricing and potential social demand.

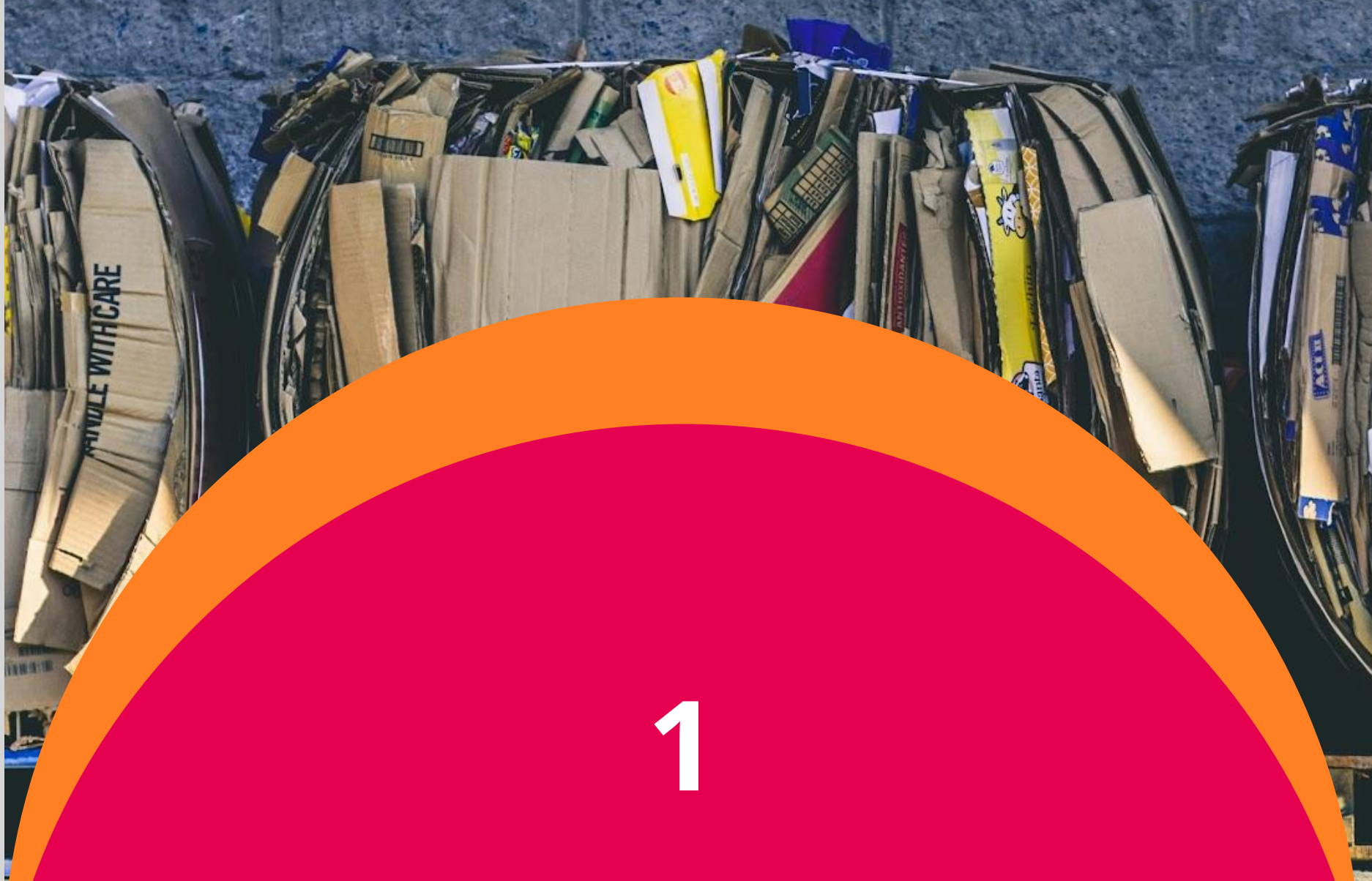
Business Models

Apply business model frameworks to develop and critique a business plan for a reuse-focused initiative.

Data Analysis Session

Work with open data sets (e.g., from the Open Repair Alliance) to analyse repair trends, common failure points, and the impact of reuse.

Assignments



1

Material Flow Report

Document the journey of a specific material (e.g., textiles, wood) in your city and propose a digital inventory system for it, referencing tools like The Restart Project's Fixometer.

2

Policy Proposal

Research the existence of local, regional and national policies and write reflections on how they can be used to encourage reuse.

Assignments

The background of the slide features a photograph of a recycling area. On the left, there are large, stacked bundles of flattened cardboard boxes, some with the text 'HANDLE WITH CARE' visible. On the right, there is a blue recycling bin filled with various cardboard boxes and debris. The entire slide is overlaid with a semi-transparent design consisting of two large, overlapping semi-circles. The left semi-circle is light blue and contains the number '3' and the title 'Market Analysis'. The right semi-circle is light orange and contains the number '4' and the title 'Contextual Considerations'. Below these titles, in the solid light blue and light orange rectangular areas respectively, are the descriptions of the assignments.

3

Market Analysis

Conduct a market survey for a chosen second-hand item or material and present a pricing strategy for a social enterprise or reuse shop.

4

Contextual Considerations

Research how value is perceived and assigned in different regions.

Main Module Outcome

Data Strategy

Develop a strategy for data collection and analysis to support local and regional material reuse - choose between available digital tools for inventory, evaluation and communications.

Module Resources



Readings

- Mazzucato, Mariana. *The Value of Everything*.
- Ostrom, Elinor. *Governing the Commons*.
- Minter, Adam. *Secondhand: Travels in the New Global Garage Sale*.
- Raworth, Kate. *Doughnut Economics*.

Websites & Tools

- Local Economies
- iFixIT Repair Guides
- Open Repair Alliance Dataset
- The Restart Project's Fixometer
- Make Works
- Dsposal
- Instructables
- YouTube channels on reuse, upcycling, repair and re-circulation



Module 4






Stories and Personal Value

This module focuses on the human and cultural dimensions of reuse, emphasising the role of storytelling, creativity, and emotional connection in building a resilient, caring reuse community.

Module Length: 3 weeks (2-3 hours per week)



Core Competencies

 Storytelling	Crafting narratives about objects and their journeys.
 Visual Documentation	Using photography, audio, and video to tell stories of reuse.
 Ethical Reflection	Reflecting on personal relationships with objects and the social-emotional impact of waste.
 Campaigns and Stakeholder Management	How to build on local culture and behaviour to leverage the reintroduction in use of goods and materials.
 Community Facilitation	Organising events that foster a sense of belonging and collective action around reuse.

Methods



Creative Workshops

Engage in creative writing, photography, or video production to tell the story of the reuse of a specific good or object.

Storytelling Circles

Organise and participate in group sessions where trainees share personal stories about repairs, family heirlooms, or found objects.

Community Events

Plan and run a small-scale event, such as a "swap meet," "repair café," or "maker faire," to put theory into practice and observe community dynamics.

Assignments



1

Narrative Project

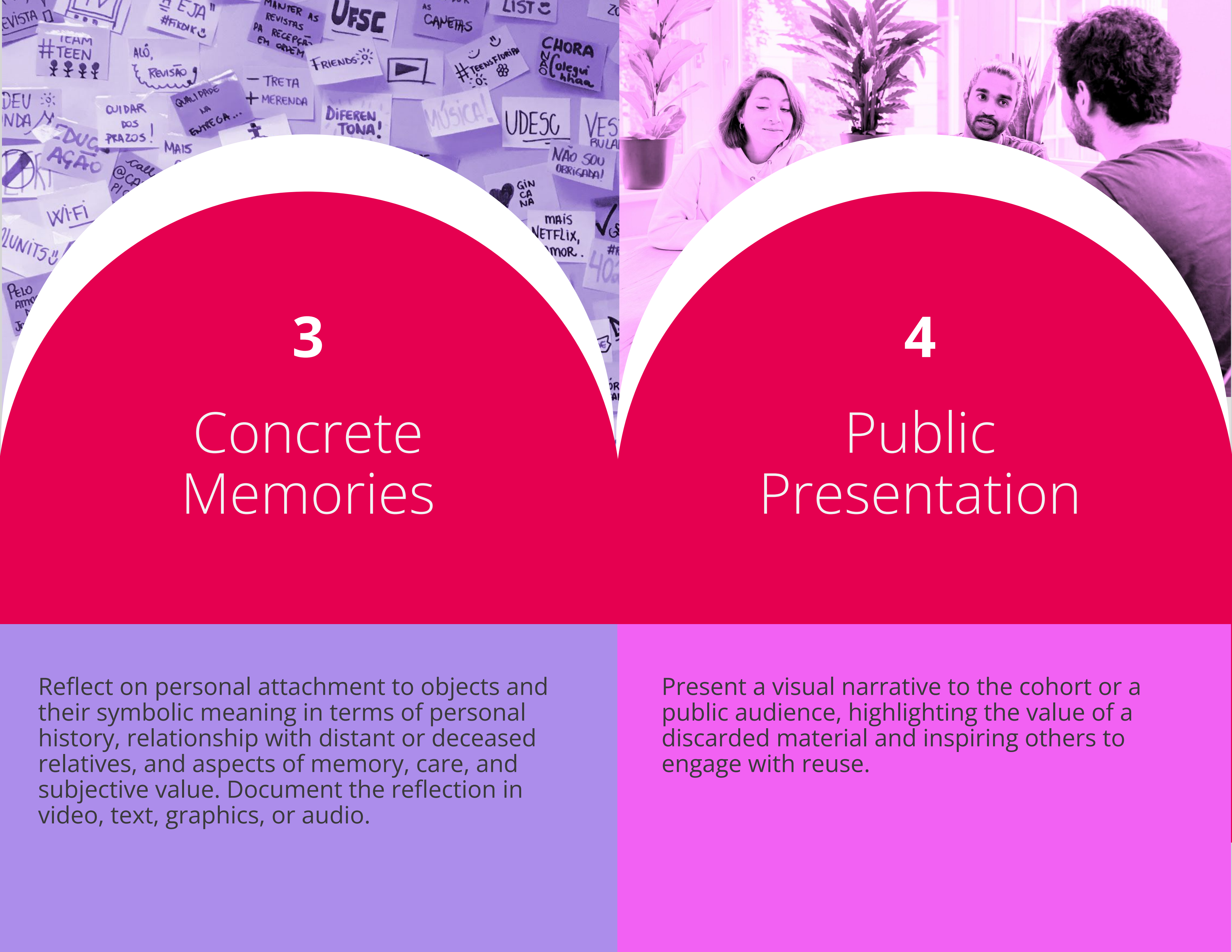
Create a video, photo essay, or written piece documenting the emotional journey of an object that was repaired or upcycled.

2

“What’s in Your Drawer?” Inventory

A personal reflection assignment where participants explore the items they own but don't use, reflecting on their stories and emotional value to cultivate an anti-disposable mindset.

Assignments



Main Module Outcome

Communication and Education Plan

Create a strategy to reach out to the local context through diverse means of communication and engagement.

Module Resources



Readings

- Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*.
- Tronto, Joan C. *Moral Boundaries*.
- Wahl, Daniel Christian. *Designing Regenerative Cultures*.

Videos

- Waste Land.
- Trash.
- Hunkin, Tim. The Secret Life of Machines.
- Prado, Marcos. Estamira.

