

RE MIDA



Overview	
Country	Italy
Type of organization	Non-profit cultural and educational centre
Number of employees	100+
Type of practice	Best
Level of investment	High
Activity type	Processing waste
Key words	Recycling / Reusing

www.remida.org

Summary

RE Mida Reggio Emilia is a pioneering center for the creative reuse of industrial and post-consumer waste materials, transforming them into resources for education, art, and design. Established in 1996, RE Mida collects, sorts, and distributes discarded materials from local industries, offering them to schools, artists, and community groups.

The center promotes a culture of sustainability, circular economy, and environmental responsibility by demonstrating the value of secondary raw materials. Through workshops, exhibitions, and educational programs, RE Mida fosters creativity, innovation, and ecological awareness, making it a model for sustainable material management and community engagement.

Background and origin

Founded in 1996 by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia in collaboration with Reggio Children and local industries, RE Mida was created to address the challenges of industrial waste and promote environmental education. Its importance lies in its ability to connect industry, education, and the creative sector, demonstrating the social and economic value of secondary materials and inspiring similar initiatives globally.

Relevance to the craft sector

RE Mida is highly relevant to the craft sector as it provides artisans, designers, and makers with access to unique, high-quality secondary materials. By enabling the transformation of industrial waste into new products, RE Mida supports sustainable craft practices, reduces raw material consumption, and fosters innovation in material use. The center's approach aligns with circular economy principles and offers a replicable model for integrating waste valorization into craft and design processes.

Target groups

- Primary: Schools (teachers, students), artists, designers, craftspeople, community groups.
- Secondary: Local industries (material donors), environmental educators, policymakers

Material focus - type of waste material involved

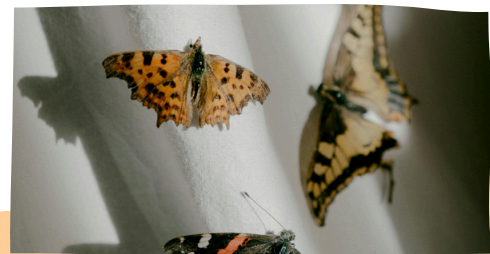
Industrial surplus, packaging, plastics, textiles, wood, metals, paper, and other non-hazardous post-consumer materials.



Source: Foto di cottonbro studio:
<https://www.pexels.com/it-it/foto/persona-che-tiene-una-borsa-tote-bianca-4068314/>

Stakeholders involved

- Municipality of Reggio Emilia (founder/support),
- Iren Emilia; Reggio Children Foundation (educational partner),
- local industries (material donors),
- schools and universities (beneficiaries),
- volunteers (operations),
- artists/designers (users/ambassadors).
- Gender-balanced participation is encouraged, with a focus on inclusion.



Source: Pexeles

Connection of the practice with the project-identified needs

Knowledge of Waste Materials

Staff and users are trained in material identification, properties, safe handling, and creative transformation techniques. Workshops provide knowledge on sorting, cleaning, and preparing diverse materials for reuse.

Green Entrepreneurial Skills

RE Mida facilitates the development of green business models by demonstrating the market potential of upcycled products, offering training in compliance, and supporting scalable community-based recycling initiatives

Creativity and Innovative Solutions

The center is a catalyst for innovation, enabling unique applications of secondary materials in art, education, and design. Projects include fashion, installations, and urban furniture, showcasing the aesthetic and functional potential of waste.

Methodological approach to implement the practice

Process description - step by step instructions for implementing the practice

RE Mida employs a participatory, community-driven approach:

1. Partnerships with industries for material collection;
2. Collect and transport surplus materials.
3. Sorting and cataloguing by staff/volunteers;
4. Make materials available to community via membership or events and distribution to users;
5. Organize educational and creative workshops.
6. Monitor impact and adapt processes.

Time: Initial setup (6–12 months); ongoing operations are continuous. Guidance from Reggio Children and similar networks.



Source: Foto di Digital Buggu:
<https://www.pexels.com/it-it/foto/pila-di-tappeti-365067/>

Related Resources that have been developed

Educational toolkits, material catalogues, workshop curricula, exhibition guides, digital resources for material tracking and impact reporting.

End product

Upcycled art pieces, educational materials, design prototypes, community installations, and sustainable craft products.

Sources of funding for this intervention

Initial and ongoing funding from Municipality of Reggio Emilia (~60%), private sector sponsorships (~20%), foundation grants (~10%), and self-generated income from workshops/memberships (~10%). [Estimates; to be confirmed]

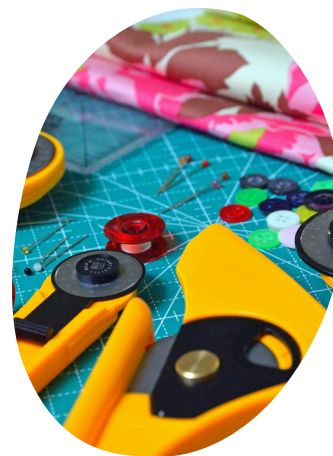
Innovation, novel methods or technologies used

RE Mida's innovation lies in its systemic, community-based approach to material reuse, integration with educational curricula, and creation of a replicable model for creative waste valorization. Digital cataloguing and participatory design processes differentiate it from traditional recycling centers.

Obstacles and challenges faced

These considerations are based on desk research and analysis of publicly available information about RE MIDA; they do not derive from direct contact or interviews with the company.

Challenges: Ensuring consistent material quality and supply, engaging diverse user groups, and measuring long-term impact. Lessons: Strong partnerships and flexible programming are key; ongoing community engagement sustains relevance.



Source: Foto di Adonyi Gábor:
<https://www.pexels.com/it-it/foto/lotto-di-strumenti-di-misurazione-giallo-1409221/>

Steps further and plans for the future

These considerations are based on desk research and analysis of publicly available information about RE- Mida, they do not derive from direct contact or interviews with the company.

Plans might include expanding material streams, enhancing digital platforms for resource sharing, increasing outreach to new user groups, and supporting the replication of the model in other regions.

Key impacts - environmental, economic & social

Diverted significant volumes of industrial waste from landfill, empowered thousands of educators and creatives, inspired similar centers worldwide, and contributed to local circular economy development.

Environmental: Reduced landfill waste, resource conservation.

Economic: Cost savings for schools, new opportunities for local artisans.

Social: Community empowerment, educational innovation, social inclusion

Qualities	
Effectiveness: How well does the practice achieve its goals?	Achieves substantial waste reduction and stimulates creative reuse at scale. High rates of material reuse and community engagement
Efficiency: Does the practice minimize resources while maximizing outputs?	Low operational costs through volunteer involvement and partnerships. Maximizes output (creative/social value) from minimal input (waste materials, staff)
Sustainability: Does the practice contribute to environmental protection, social equality and long-term viability?	Embedded in local policy and education. Long-term viability ensured by multi-source funding, community ownership, and integration with education
Transferability: Are the methods transferable in different contexts?	Well-documented methods; adaptable to diverse contexts with available local partnerships and resources.

Required Competences for the best practice implementation

Activities-to-competences mapping

Associated competences	
Knowledge	Understanding of circular economy principles, waste material properties, sorting and handling techniques, and environmental policies related to reuse and recycling
Skills	Ability to plan, organize, and manage logistics efficiently, including scheduling material collection and distribution. Focus on achieving project goals pragmatically, measuring outcomes, and ensuring quality in operations. Ensuring high-quality sorting and preparation of materials for safe and effective reuse
Attitudes	Effective interaction with companies donating materials, educators, artists, volunteers, and the public; clear communication in workshops and educational settings. Encouraging creative reuse of materials and supporting innovative educational and artistic projects

Training needs required for successful implementation

Technical Training

- Upcycling and eco-design methods
- Sewing and garment-making
- Supply chain coordination and inventory software
- Impact reporting tools

Social Integration and HR

- Inclusive recruitment practices
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) workshops
- Coaching/mentorship for vulnerable workers

Sustainability and Circular Economy

- Circular economy fundamentals
- Environmental regulations in fashion/textiles
- Lifecycle assessment (LCA) basics

Digital and Business Tools

- E-commerce platforms

Lessons learned

- Waste materials can be valuable resources for education and creativity.
- Community involvement is crucial for the success of sustainability initiatives.
- Changing perceptions of waste requires continuous effort and innovative approaches.

References / links

- <https://www.remida.org/>



Source: Foto di Julia Kuzenkov: <https://www.pexels.com/it-it/foto/top-con-colletto-in-denim-blu-con-sovrapposizione-di-testo-we-see-what-we-want-1176618/>