Repair Café

Toss it? No way!

ORGANISE YOUR OWN REPAIR CAFÉ

The tried and tested Repair Café manual

Repaircafe.org

Acknowledgements

Publication: Repair Café Foundation

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Disclaimer

No rights can be derived from the information in this manual. The Repair Café Foundation cannot be held liable for any damages arising from carrying out the advice contained in this manual. Local organisers must cover potential risks themselves and they are responsible for safety in their Repair Café.

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Dear local organiser,

We are really pleased you are enthusiastic about Repair Café! And that you wish to get a Repair Café up and running in the place where you live. A Repair Café is urgently needed because far too many things get thrown away unnecessarily, even where you live. People with practical knowledge often stand unwillingly on the sidelines.

That can change! By setting up a Repair Café in your town or city, you can actively contribute to a more sustainable society. You can help create a society where everyone can find a place, where repair expertise is cherished and passed on, and where valuable raw materials are used in a responsible way.

The Repair Café Foundation will happily help you get started. This manual contains all sorts of practical tips to assist in setting up a structured Repair Café where you live. Wherever possible, we will support the launch of your local Repair Café through publicity via our international network of repair fanatics and other interested people. Moreover, every day from our Amsterdam head office we try and develop ways of supporting Repair Cafés everywhere. We'll keep you up to date!

You have to comply with a few conditions in order to receive our support: your local initiative must bear the name of Repair Café, all publicity must use the Repair Café logo and must always refer to the website Repaircafe.org. This is how we can build up an international chain of active and recognizable Repair Cafés, using the motto: 'Toss it? No way!'

I wish you good luck on behalf of the Repair Café Foundation – and, what's more, have fun with repairs!

Best wishes,

Martine Postma
Director Repair Café Foundation

PS. Do you have any comments on the information in this manual or would you like to add anything?
Please tell us! Your suggestions can help make this manual even more complete.

‘I look forward to seeing Repair Cafés being set up every-where in the world. Fantastic news!’

You will find responses like the above throughout the entire manual. They were made by visitors to Repair Cafés and the website Repaircafe.org.

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The origins of Repair Café

The Repair Café concept comes from the Netherlands. It was formulated in 2009 by Martine Postma, at the time an Amsterdam-based journalist/publicist. She hit on the idea of setting up low-key meeting places nationwide where neighbours could repair their broken items themselves supported by specialists and in a relaxed atmosphere.

The very first Repair Café was held in Amsterdam on 18 October 2009. Dozens of neighbours and interested people from further afield showed up at the foyer of the Fijnhout Theatre that Sunday, where a host of volunteer repair experts were at the ready with tools and materials. The afternoon was a great success; the initiative had obviously tapped into a clear need.

This prompted Martine to continue her activities and to start the Repair Café Foundation. Since 2011, this foundation has provided support to local groups in the Netherlands and other countries wishing to start their own Repair Café.

The Repair Café Foundation has the following goals:
a) to bring back repairing into local society in a modern way;
b) to maintain repair expertise and to spread this knowledge;
c) to promote social cohesion in the local community by connecting neighbours from very different backgrounds and with different motives with each other through an inspiring and low-key event.

The foundation has an executive committee comprising three persons, namely:

- Leonie Reinders (director of BKN, the association of Dutch thrift stores), chair
- Martijn Leusink (Repair Café organiser in the Dutch city of Utrecht), secretary
- Tim Stok (owner of an accounting firm for charity foundations), treasurer.

Director Martine Postma is in charge of the day-to-day running.

Contact:
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Repaircafe.org

Why a Repair Café?

Western society revolves round consumption. We increasingly buy more things and throw away more than ever. We use the luxury items we own for shorter times. As soon as these items show the slightest defects – such as a stool with a wobbly leg, a CD player with a lid that won't open or a woollen jumper with a hole in the elbow – we throw them away and buy a new product. Many things get thrown away within the space of one year.

Very few people even think about the possibility of repairing the old product. Most people no longer know how to repair things. This type of knowledge is noticeably on the decline. People still in possession of this practical know-how (such as craftspeople, the elderly and non-skilled workers) are often not adequately appreciated by society and even find themselves standing on the sidelines against their will. Their know-how is never used, or hardly ever. Yet it is these people who could greatly contribute towards making our society more sustainable.

By using them as supervisors during repair meetings, many positive effects can be achieved at the same time. People who might otherwise be sidelined are involved again. Valuable practical knowledge is passed on. The volume of raw materials and energy needed to make new products is reduced. Furthermore, repairing instead of throwing away helps to cut CO_2 emissions; manufacturing new products and recycling old ones causes CO_2 to be released.

Repair Café teaches people to see their possessions in a new light. And, once again, to appreciate their value. Repair Café helps change people's mindset. This is essential to kindle their enthusiasm for a sustainable society.

But above all, Repair Café just wants to show how much fun repairing things can be, and how easy it often is. Why don't you give it a go?

Start your own Repair Café

People in towns and cities everywhere are becoming increasingly enthusiastic about Repair Café. And this leads to the wish to start one locally as well. In this information manual, we give you a rundown of what is involved in organising your own Repair Café.

We suggest how to find a suitable site, how to accumulate enough expertise to help make repairs, tools and repair materials, how to generate publicity, how to attract visitors and, of course, how to get financial backing. We also deal with ensuring continuity and safety and improving your local Repair Café through evaluation.

The ideas we put your way can readily be translated to best suit the situation in your town or city. After all, every town or city council has their own way of organising things. You know the situation in the place you live better than anyone else.

Site

Repair Café is an activity both for and by neighbours. Which is why it is better to choose a site that is low-key, easily accessible and in the heart of a residential area. Think, for instance, of a community centre or a neighbourhood centre.

The site has to be big enough to accommodate a large number of tables, where various repair experts can sit. These tables must not be too small, because each expert will need room for his or her tools. In addition, you need work space for the broken items visitors will bring along. It would be best if visitors also had a place to sit, such as on the other side of the table. After all, visitors will get down to work jointly with the experts, in the hope they too will learn something. Make sure there are enough chairs for visitors who are still waiting their turn.

Moreover, it's pleasant if catering facilities are available. In other words, that tea and coffee can be made for volunteers and visitors. In an ideal situation, there should also be enough room for a separate table where visitors can sit and drink tea or coffee. Because Repair Café, besides being an afternoon for making repairs, also gives visitors the opportunity to meet their neighbours and to make new contacts.

Plan

In the lead-up to each Repair Café meeting, lots of things have to be done and organised. We have itemised all these one-off and recurring activities below. The following pages give more information on how and why and what as regards all these points.

Orientation stage

- look for co-organisers
- hold orientation meetings with potential partners/ financial backers: do they think the plan can work and are they able and willing to make a contribution?

'An amazing initiative. Keep up the good work'

Preparatory stage

- fix a date – preferably a few months in advance
- fix a site
- allocate tasks within the organising group
- look for volunteers
- organise tools and materials

One month in advance

- check whether sufficient staff have been found and the tools have been provided
- start by getting Repair Café known and publicised, e.g. via own website, Facebook and Twitter (for follow-ups: first email announcement to freshly built-up email list of people interested)
- compile a list of email addresses of newspaper, radio and TV editorial staff and websites you want to send a press release to
- compile a list of email addresses of contacts at participating organisations, who also should receive a press release
- make a list of relevant (events) websites where you can post an announcement

Two weeks in advance

- hang up posters and distribute flyers in central places in the neighbourhood
- take posters and flyers to participating organisations
- mail press release to (local and regional) newspapers, broadcasting companies and websites and people on contact list – follow-up publicity: include an interesting photo of the last meeting
- place announcement on event sites and what's-onguides
- send a second announcement mail to email network of interested people

One week in advance

- ring up all the volunteers to reconfirm agreements and to pass on the latest messages
- phone press contacts again (e.g. to ask whether they need any more information)
- send forwarding mail to friends, acquaintances and other people who may be interested
- post brief updates on Twitter/Facebook etc.

A few days in advance

- do shopping (non-perishables) for catering for volunteers/guests
- run through checklist and provide what is still missing

One day in advance

- do shopping (perishables) for catering for volunteers/guests

- post last update on Twitter/Facebook etc.
- have required things ready

On the actual day

- be on site several hours before the opening to set up
- make sure, throughout the Repair Café, that everything goes as planned
- take photos of lots of different situations in your Repair Café

The following day

- send a thank you email to all volunteers, and include a nice photo if possible. Ask for comments and criticisms with respect to evaluation
- send a short report (+ photo) to participating organisations
- post report and photos on your own website
- add newly compiled email addresses to email network
- mail email network to point out online report

A few days later

- process the evaluation forms from visitors as well as the remarks from volunteers
- evaluate good points with participating organisations and see where there is room for improvement
- process all this information in a plan for the next time

Additional materials

The Repair Café Foundation has made the following (publicity) material electronically available for local organisers:

- Repair Café logo
- Announcement poster (A3)
- Announcement flyer (A5)
- Posters to hang on the walls of the Repair Café (A3)
- Poster to put next to the tip jar (A3)
- Signs with names of basis stations
- Evaluation form (A5)
- Registration form and house rules (A5 and A6)
- Volunteer recruitment form
- Donor recruitment form
- Standard press release
- Information on working safely in the Repair Café
- Background information on Repair Café

Publicity and visitors

When you organise your first Repair Café it's very important that enough people show up. The first gathering sets the tone – not just for the visitors and the financial backers, but for the volunteer staff too. Try and make sure it's a well-attended event that calls for more.

You can attract visitors by making sure the initiative gets lots of publicity, for example, by setting up a website or Facebook page for your Repair Café and regularly adding posts. A Twitter account is also easily set up. Just before the start of your first Repair Café meeting, you can use it to send reminders to all out there. Also place a message on the English Repair Café forum: Repaircafe-forum.org/english.

The Repair Café Foundation can also add your Repair Café location to the frequently visited website Repaircafe.org. We literally put your Repair Café – including contact information and possibly a link to your own website – on the map. That way, everyone can always find your Repair Café! That will save you doing a lot of work to generate publicity. In order to take advantage of this, you do need to let us know in advance where and when exactly your Repair Café will be starting. In

the letter on the use of the additional material, you can find information on what we need to know exactly and how to reach us. You can find this letter in the folder with additional documents that you downloaded as part of the starter kit.

Press release

You have to take care of local publicity yourself. Send a press release to local and regional newspapers, radio stations, TV channels and websites that will broadcast your activities in the community (including your council's own website). The Repair Café Foundation provides a standard press release, where all you have to fill in are a few details such as the name of your organisation, and the location and date of the Repair Café. It goes without saying you can write your own press release. Give a clear explanation of what will happen on the day in question. Please include information from the checklist on page 11.

What do you need to include in a press release?

- ☐ the date
- ☐ the site (address, telephone number, website [if available])
- ☐ the exact time
- ☐ the fact that the event highlights repairing things
- ☐ the fact that tools, materials and specialist help will all be available in the Repair Café
- ☐ the fact that visitors should bring along their broken items
- ☐ the fact that people are expected to make their own repairs or in any case to watch how repairs can be made
- ☐ an explanation of why it is necessary that making repairs becomes part and parcel of logical behaviour in everyday life
- ☐ the names of companies/institutions that helped get your event up and running, including the Repair Café Foundation
- ☐ the name and telephone number of a contact who can provide more information about this local initiative, and, if possible, a link to the website of the local Repair Café
- ☐ the Repair Café logo
- ☐ the link to the Repair Café website: Repaircafe.org

'Wonderful initiative! A great step on the road to sustainability'

You can also send the press release to the local offices of political parties or departments of organisations involved in sustainability and the environment, wellness and community work or reintegration. And, of course, you can send it to your contacts at participating organisations; perhaps they can post it on their own website or publish it in a newsletter. Don't forget, you should include an in-depth article about Repair Café on your own website, or on the website of the group you are co-organising the event with.

Posters and flyers

In addition, it is useful to hang up posters announcing the event in busy places that can reach many people such as libraries, community centres, local government offices, schools, day care nurseries, cafés, recycling/second-hand shops etc. Take posters to participating organisations as well. The Repair Café Foundation provides posters where all you have to fill in is the local information.

Flyers are another good way of spreading the word about your event. The Repair Café Foundation provides flyers in A5 format. Leave piles of flyers in places where groups of people meet – post them door-to-door in the neighbourhood where the Repair Café will be held or hand them out at the local market or in a busy shopping high street one week before the event.

You can also attract visitors by email. Compose a mail with all the relevant information and send it to your friends and acquaintances – ask them to forward it to other people who may be interested.

Invited guests

Invite a few local key persons to the first Repair Café in your neighbourhood. These could include: councillors for the environment (because of the initiative's sustainability issues) and social services (because of the social aspect), council members, the director of a local welfare organisation, the director of a recycling shop, members of the local Lions Club or Rotary Club, the chair of a volunteer centre, the director of a vocational training programme, a journalist and a photographer from a local newspaper, radio or TV station. This is how you can ensure that enough people will attend the very first Repair Café and at the same time create broad support among various local organisations for the follow-up.

Basis stations

On the basis of supply and demand, you can invite a whole range of craftspeople to act as experts in the Repair Café. Time will have to tell, of course, what kinds of repairs are needed most in your Repair Café. In general, however, a Repair Café will have several basis stations, most of which will be manned by a few basis specialists. You can see below what stations these are and what happens there. There is a list in the frames giving suggestions for basic materials for each station.

Reception table

Visitors entering the Repair Café need a certain degree of guidance. For many, it is their first visit, and they don't yet know their way around a Repair Café. This is why it is handy to have a person sitting at a table near the entrance to welcome each visitor. Depending on what item the visitor has brought along, this person can tell them which station they should go to.

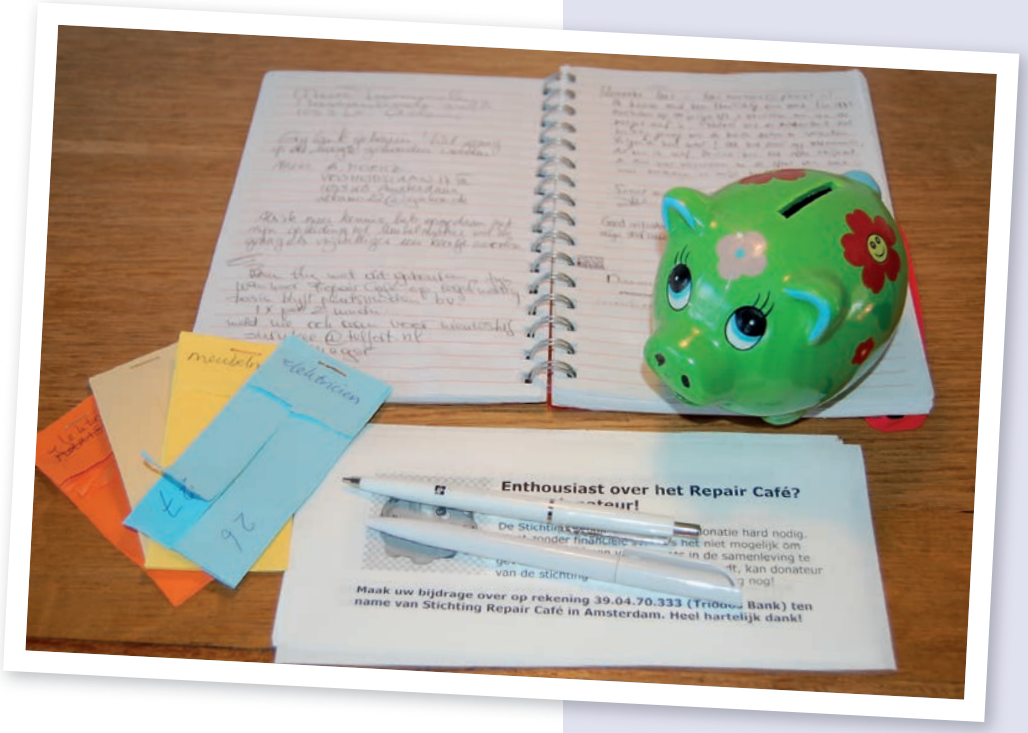
If it is very busy, it helps to use a number system. The receptionist hands out a number so visitors don't have to worry about queue jumpers.

The receptionist informs visitors of the house rules in the Repair Café and makes sure they fill in the registration form properly. This form contains important information such as name, email address and the type of repair. The receptionist notes later on whether the repair was successful and collects the registration forms. The registration form gives insight in important data. The visitors' email addresses are useful for building up a network of interested locals. It also provides evidence that Repair Café is meeting a demand in the area where you live. You can use this evidence when trying to raise funds to financially support your local Repair Café. The bigger your network becomes, the stronger the local position of Repair Café will be. What's more, it will become increasingly easier to arrange publicity for up-and-coming meetings.

Materials (guideline)

Reception table

- ☐ Registration forms
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Numbered ticket books in various colours (each station has a different colour)
- ☐ Flyer with information about the next Repair Café
- ☐ Flyer with information about donating/sponsoring
- ☐ An eye-catching tip jar
- ☐ Guest book (may be placed on reading table)
- ☐ Digital camera



Electrical appliances

This table in Repair Café is usually the busiest of all. Which isn't surprising: small electrical appliances such as toasters, hand blenders and lamps are easy to take along to a Repair Café. Moreover, it is almost impossible to repair these types of appliances elsewhere or to get them repaired, whilst they frequently break because they are used the most often or the quality leaves much to be desired. In this respect, Repair Café offers a unique solution for lots of people. You'll see that reflected in the numbers of visitors.

Experience has shown that one repair expert at this station cannot keep up with demand. Please make sure there are at least two experts at the table for electrical appliances. There is often more than enough work for three or even four experts. It also means that people have to wait less. In addition, the various volunteers can pool their knowledge: what the one expert can't fix, the other expert possibly can.

Materials (guideline)

Electrical appliances

- ☐ Computer with internet access, to be able to search online for user or repair manuals, for example via Manuall.co.uk or via Repaircafe-forum.org/english
- ☐ Set of screwdrivers in assorted sizes, cross-head as well as flat-head
- ☐ Set of precision screwdrivers
- ☐ Voltage tester
- ☐ Handgrip 1/4" for bits
- ☐ Set of bits in box, torques
- ☐ Set of bits in special sizes
- ☐ Drill
- ☐ Hammer 400 gr and 100 gr
- ☐ Soft-faced hammer
- ☐ Small bench vice, so-called clamping vice
- ☐ Water pump pliers
- ☐ Electrician's pliers
- ☐ Side-cutting pliers
- ☐ Wire stripper
- ☐ Pointed pliers in assorted sizes
- ☐ Multi plug extension lead
- ☐ Spare parts tray
- ☐ Universal measuring instrument
- ☐ Solderer + solder + grease
- ☐ Soldering iron 60W + solder
- ☐ Soldering iron 15W
- ☐ Loose plugs
- ☐ Plugs with hook-up lead (with and without switch)
- ☐ Loose switches (small)
- ☐ Connectors
- ☐ Telephone lead (connection as well as mouthpiece)
- ☐ Telephone plugs
- ☐ Loose lead to connect to appliances (+ earth)
- ☐ Universal lubricant
- ☐ Kitchen paper
- ☐ Alcohol for cleaning purposes (more on page 15)

- ☐ Cleaning rag
- ☐ Box with remaining screws
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Insulation tape
- ☐ Cable ties
- ☐ Pieces of VD wire
- ☐ Table lamp (to illuminate delicate work)

Materials (guideline)

Clothing

- ☐ Two sewing machines
- ☐ Spools with thread of all colours
- ☐ Sewing machine spools prepared with different coloured thread
- ☐ Sewing needles (for machine and by hand)
- ☐ Darning needles
- ☐ Pins
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Buttons in all shapes and sizes
- ☐ Denim jeans buttons
- ☐ Press-studs
- ☐ Zips in all shapes and sizes
- ☐ Appliqués
- ☐ Iron-on fabric
- ☐ Elbow and knee patches
- ☐ Ironing board
- ☐ Iron
- ☐ Crochet needle
- ☐ Hook and loop fastener
- ☐ Elastic
- ☐ Patches of (strong) fabric in various colours
- ☐ Patches of felt in various colours
- ☐ Bias binding in various colours
- ☐ Darning wool in various colours
- ☐ Punch machine (not strictly necessary) to repair holes in woollen clothing (if there is no punch machine:) foam rubber pin cushions for wool repairs
- ☐ Felt needles
- ☐ Merino wool in various colours

Clothing

The sewing table can often get extremely busy as well. Visitors bring all sorts of small things to be repaired to Repair Café: a torn-off zip, a burst seam, a hole in the knee of a child's pair of denims or in the elbow of a woollen jumper. But it's not just clothing that people bring. Visitors will turn up with sewing jobs for handbags, table cloths, decorative cushions, stuffed animals etc. It nearly always concerns jobs that are too insignificant or too unattractive to take to a professional seamstress. Or even work that has been rejected by a seamstress.

One expert at the sewing table is the minimum, two is much better. This fits in better with the broad range of jobs people want done. The chance that a visitor can be helped by someone who feels affinity for a certain type of repair is much greater this way. You can also try to find one volunteer for actual repairs and a second one for giving clothes and accessories a new lease of life or refreshing and improving them.

'When will you come to Oxford?'

Furniture, toys and other wireless items

Visits to this station – and the items people bring – vary considerably. Visitors bring (relatively small) chairs and stools, but dolls' furniture, photo frames and wooden toys as well. A lot of people simply ask questions, about a much larger piece of furniture they are unable to bring along, for instance. Some visitors bring a photo of a larger object to show.

One expert at this station is enough in the main. Ideally it should be a person who knows about wood and glueing: a furniture maker, a hobby carpenter or an allround DIYer. Because visitors to this table don't always have their item for repair with them, it's more practical for the expert to have a few common repair examples at hand. Such as a chair with a wonky leg to show visitors how to set about repairing it. Or a couple of bits of wood to demonstrate how to make a mortise joint.

On the whole, most (hobby) carpenters will be able to find something to bring from home to demonstrate. But a stroll through the neighbourhood on the day the bin men collect the rubbish is bound to result in a useful repair example or two.

Materials (guideline)

Furniture, toys and other wireless items

- ☐ Joiner's bench
- ☐ Saw
- ☐ Fretsaw
- ☐ Drill + drill heads
- ☐ Hammer
- ☐ Pincers
- ☐ Water pump pliers
- ☐ Screwdrivers (cross-head and flat-head) in various sizes
- ☐ Stanley knife
- ☐ Several glueing clamps
- ☐ Assorted sandpaper
- ☐ Liquid wood
- ☐ Penetrating oil
- ☐ Screws in various shapes and sizes
- ☐ Nails in various shapes and sizes
- ☐ Dowels in various thicknesses (e.g. 6 mm and 8 mm)
- ☐ Construction adhesive
- ☐ Wood glue
- ☐ Panel adhesive
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Tape measure

Bicycles

Visits to the bicycle station also vary greatly. Experience shows that visitors have to get used to the idea they can use Repair Café for their bicycles as well. Once they have absorbed the fact, they happily bring along their bikes.

Similar to the clothing station, the jobs carried out at the bicycle repair station are usually not the large repairs which you would go to a 'real' bicycle repair shop for. Instead, they tend to be smaller jobs that people could do at home but never get round to because they just don't get the tool kit out of the shed. For example: cleaning the tight-fitting cycle stand and lubricating it again, raising the saddle of a child's bike, fixing a loose reflector. Or mending a tyre.

It comes in handy to have a few bikes ready at the bicycle station as examples. To practise mending a tyre, for instance. Spare parts can be useful too. Such as a wheel where the hub can be opened and re-assembled.

One person usually suffices to man the bicycle station. However, once it gets busy we recommend two people.

Materials (guideline)

Bicycles

- ☐ Tyre levers
- ☐ Solution
- ☐ Sandpaper
- ☐ Rubber patches
- ☐ Bicycle workbench
- ☐ Set of ring spanners
- ☐ Set of open-end spanners
- ☐ Set of box spanners
- ☐ Pedal spanner
- ☐ Screwdrivers
- ☐ Various pliers
- ☐ Spoke adjuster
- ☐ Fork disengager
- ☐ Chain punch
- ☐ Adjustable wrench
- ☐ Bicycle pump
- ☐ Hand drill + drill heads
- ☐ Spare parts for repairing lighting: leads, connectors, cable ties, light bulbs
- ☐ Volt gauge to test light bulbs
- ☐ 6 V-battery to test lighting
- ☐ Degreaser (green soap)
- ☐ Old rags
- ☐ Grease
- ☐ Brush for applying grease
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Wire
- ☐ A few buckets and trays
- ☐ A bike to practise on or use as an example
- ☐ A single wheel, by way of example
- ☐ Tray with old screws, nuts and other small spare parts

Glue, string and tape table

If you have enough room, it can come in handy to have a separate glue, string and tape table. This is the spot where the simplest repairs can be carried out, which don't fit in to any specific category. An assortment of glue is on the table (such as wood glue, construction adhesive and super glue), besides balls of string and various types of tape (duct tape is particularly useful). Cable ties often come in handy as well.

Visitors to the glue, string and tape table can glue together their broken porcelain vase, repair the tear in their plastic laundry basket with a cable tie, or wrap the burst hose of their vacuum cleaner with tape. In most cases, visitors to this station get along fine without any assistance. However, should an all-round DIYer wish to lend a helping hand at this station, it can be regarded as an extra service.

Another option is to place the glue, string and tape table close to the furniture station. The specialist there frequently uses glue and can give advice to visitors to the glue, string and tape table whenever necessary.

Materials (guideline)

Glue, string and tape table

- ☐ Wood glue
- ☐ Panel adhesive
- ☐ Construction adhesive
- ☐ Bison kit/Velpon or the like
- ☐ Degreaser
- ☐ Lubricant
- ☐ String in various thicknesses
- ☐ Cable ties in a range of colours and sizes
- ☐ Wire
- ☐ Wire-cutters
- ☐ A pair of scissors
- ☐ Filling knife
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Other tape in various colours
- ☐ Double-sided adhesive tape

Reading table

Visitors can draw inspiration about repairs and home DIY at the reading table. You can supply a range of books on this subject for people to leaf through. Buy them cheaply at charity, recycling or second-hand shops. In addition, you can place flyers and brochures on the table which publicise local initiatives focusing on recycling, cutting down on waste, craftsmanship or sustainability. You can also put out a plastic business card holder so local craftspeople can leave their business cards.

Guest book

A guest book can be a valuable extra. Place it on the reading table and actively encourage visitors to leave a reaction in it. It's also a great way of showing the outside world that a Repair Café in your neighbourhood is valued and very necessary!

Materials (guideline)

Reading table

- ☐ Books about making repairs
- ☐ Books on DIY at home
- ☐ Books/magazines on recycling, reducing waste, craftsmanship and the like
- ☐ Brochures and flyers on local initiatives concerning sustainability
- ☐ Flyer with information about the next Repair Cafés
- ☐ Flyer with information about donating/sponsoring
- ☐ Plastic business card holder for business cards
- ☐ Guest book + pen

'There would be great interest in a Repair Café in Newcastle'

Specialists

How can you find the right experts to lend a hand making repairs in your Repair Café? One basic piece of advice is, of course, to start asking round in your own network. Everybody knows a handy neighbour or a friend whose wife has DIY know-how. Or an acquaintance who has a brother who always does all the repairs at home. Via via you can go quite a long way in manning all the basis stations in the Repair Café.

Furthermore, you can try and find people through volunteer networks such as the local volunteer club, charity shop or recycling shop. Or you can approach local associations like a carpentry club or computer club. Or else try the community centres, which often have a large network of local residents who are interested.

Get in touch with coordinators of reintegration projects. Councils frequently have projects to help people who have been unemployed for a long time, for whatever reason, to get back into a job or in any case back into a daily routine. People in these projects often work with their hands: they give bicycles or old computers a new lease of life or do carpentry or sewing. In short, many of these reintegration projects are occupied precisely with the sort of practical handiwork carried out in the Repair Café. Participants in these reintegration projects often thoroughly enjoy getting involved in Repair Café. By getting these projects involved in Repair Café you immediately increase support for the initiative within the local council. And, in turn, that has a positive effect on getting it financed.

Pay a visit to craftspeople in the neighbourhood as well. You never know, a furniture maker might like to attend Repair Café as a carpenter (and advertise his own furniture workshop at the same time). Or perhaps the sewing atelier round the corner knows of a retired tailor's cutter with some spare time on her hands. Get in touch with institutes for professional education. By taking part in Repair Café, students on various courses (technology, woodwork, fashion design) could gain additional practical experience.

Post notices in neighbourhood centres, libraries and supermarkets. Place a notice on the community centre's website. Send a press release to the editorial staff of the local newspaper. Talk about your plans to as many different people as possible. And put a notice on websites of volunteer clubs etc.

Once you have found the specialists you need, bear in mind that these people have all volunteered to give up their spare time and will only continue to do so if they thoroughly enjoy what they are doing. So make sure you regularly keep in touch with these volunteers. See to it personally that they have tea, coffee and sandwiches and the like on the day itself. Listen to suggestions or critical comments made by volunteers. Make sure they are properly thanked afterwards. If possible, try to arrange a small gift every now and then.

'Great initiative! Good luck and hope to see you again soon'

How to get hold of all the things you need

You have seen from the lists on the previous pages that a Repair Café needs a considerable amount of tools and materials. How can you get your hands on all you need? Some things you will just have to buy, but not everything. Many items can be acquired in other ways. Perhaps your town or city has a sewing machine shop or haberdashery that would be willing to lend two sewing machines and/or sewing things in exchange for advertising (shop name in press release).

Furthermore, many specialists have their own tools at home or in their workplace. They probably would have no objection whatsoever in bringing items along in a bag or a box – preferably with a name tag or something similar attached.

'Too many things get thrown away'

Decorating the space

It is best to decorate the space where the Repair Café is held in Repair Café style. The Repair Café Foundation can supply posters electronically with photos of people repairing things and the Repair Café logo. You can print these posters yourself and have them laminated so they are re-usable.

The foundation also supplies signs with the names of the various basis stations. See the list of additional material on page 10 for a complete overview.

If the venue is not immediately visible from the street, it may be a good idea to have a sandwich board, a folding blackboard or suchlike to point out where the Repair Café is being held.

Safety and liability

Local organisers often ask the Repair Café Foundation about issues surrounding safety and liability. How do you prevent accidents happening in the Repair Café, or things getting damaged? And in the event of something like that happening, how can you, the organiser, make sure that you are not held liable?

Because safety comes first in the Repair Café, the Repair Café Foundation has dedicated a seperate document with additional information to this issue. You'll find it among the additional materials that you have received as part of the digital starter kit. Read it closely and share it with everyone in your Repair Café.

The first piece of advice when it comes to working safely is, obviously, to remind everyone - volunteers and visitors alike - of their own responsibility, and to discourage people from starting on things they're not certain of without proper supervision or help. Your local authority or a facilitator such as a community centre can help with information on insurance cover for volunteers. Many local authorities and/or facilitators have insurance cover for volunteers. Exactly what is covered by this limited insurance cover may differ significantly and is under no circumstances intended as a way to circumvent insurance policies that an organisation can take out itself. For more information on this point, look on your own local authority's website.

Private liability insurance policies also often offer secondary cover for damage sustained by third parties caused by volunteers. The nature of this also differs from insurer to insurer, and not everyone has private liability insurance. Make sure you discuss this issue with your volunteers in good time.

Apart from the volunteers, you must also consider the people visiting the Repair Cafés. In terms of personal injury, it stands to reason that they are covered by their own insurance policy. In order to prevent visitors holding you, the Repair Café organiser, liable for damage that is the result, whether directly or

indirectly, of activities in the Repair Café, the Repair Café Foundation applies an 'opt-in' system, whereby visitors must first confirm their agreement with the house rules of the Repair Café.

The house rules explain that everything done in the name of Repair Café is done voluntarily, and that the organisers and repairers are not liable for damage. By printing out the house rules on the reverse of the registration forms, getting visitors to confirm agreement to them with their signature, and collecting and storing these forms afterwards, you can in many cases tackle the issue of liability satisfactorily.

It is, however, highly advisable to have a local lawyer or legal expert check the validity and enforceability of the warranty and liability clauses in the house rules document. The text provided by the Repair Café Foundation contains a generic disclaimer of liability, but local legislation and case law may overrule this disclaimer.

The Repair Café Foundation recommends that local organisers who need more certainty in the field of safety and liability take out their own personal liability and accident insurance. In this case, however, the organiser must be a legal entity, such as a charitable trust/foundation.

Ensuring continuity

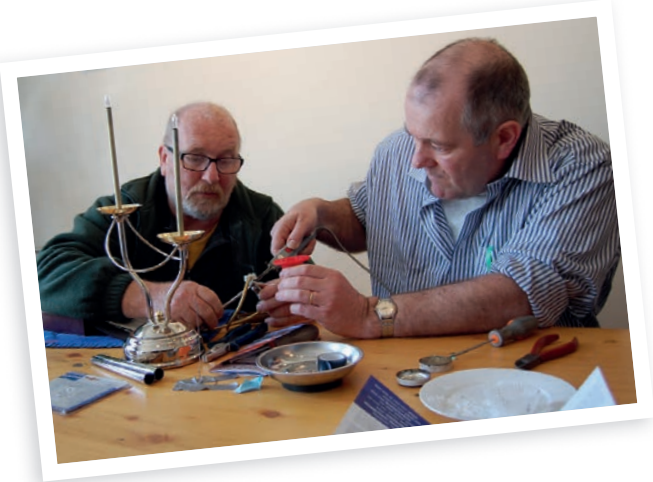
Organising a Repair Café takes up a lot of time and energy. If possible, you won't want to spend all your energy on a one-off event, but will try and turn it into a long-term venture. To help increase your Repair Café's chance of survival, it's better to get enough people involved in organising it and to share out all the various tasks from the very beginning. This will prevent the initiative from falling apart if one person drops out and at the same time helps to reduce the chance that someone will drop out because they have too much on their plate.

It is good for continuity if you can arrange for at least one person to carry out work for Repair Café as part of their job or as a work placement. Think, for instance, of an employee or a trainee in a neighbourhood centre. It can come in handy if this person takes on coordinating tasks such as maintaining contact and making agreements with participating organisations, recruiting volunteers and keeping updates of everything that has been done and that still needs doing.

To safeguard continuity it is a good idea to create broad support for Repair Café among different organisations. So don't limit yourself to environmental and sustainability organisations, but spread the net further to include organisations that help reintegration of the 'core jobless' with a view to social sustainability. This might include ethnic minorities too, for example, and schools wishing to provide young people with additional educational practical skills. Try and think of as many different types of organisations that could support their own goals by getting involved in Repair Café. By drumming up support for the initiative through these organisations, you can achieve the goal of getting people from all walks of life involved in ongoing Repair Café events. You therefore have a stronger chance of giving Repair Café a permanent place in your community.

Evaluation

On the day of the first Repair Café you will notice that some things will not go as planned, no matter how well prepared you are. You might find out that there aren't enough of some experts and too many of other experts, that an essential tool is missing or that you have forgotten to arrange one final thing. We advise you to write down these experiences immediately after the event so things can run more smoothly next time. What's more, after the Repair Café is over, it can be useful to document the data you collected via the registration form and to store it in a file.



This will give you an instantaneous record of statistics on the gatherings (how many repairs, what types, successful/not successful).

Volunteers will also have observations made in hind-sight, and the same holds for the visitors. The latter can leave suggestions in the guest book, but the Repair Café Foundation also provides evaluation forms in A5 format, which you can hand out to visitors. You can put a letterbox or tray next to the exit where people can leave their filled-in forms. You can easily email the volunteers with questions about their ex-periences during the Repair Café day itself, asking for comments and suggestions.

By collecting remarks from a wide range of people and by acting on them, you can gear your Repair Café to better meet the wishes and expectations of visitors and volunteer staff alike. And that can only serve to consolidate the feasibility of your initiative.

Financial support

As local organiser you are responsible for getting financial support for your Repair Café. Fortunately, organisational costs are reasonably limited each time, especially if you work entirely with volunteers. Or if you can find a civil servant, a social worker or a work placement trainee who is willing to carry out certain coordinating activities in the context of a job or work placement.

Experience shows that most Repair Café organisers do not have to spend money to rent a suitable room. In general they find free accomodation pretty easily, for instance in a community centre, in the common room of the retirement home or in the local thrift store. Costs for publicity decrease once your Repair Café be-comes better known, especially when it takes place at a fixed day and location. On average, if you organise one Repair Café meeting per month, you will approxi-mately arrive at the yearly budget on the next page.

Cost estimate for organising your own Repair Café (per year)

Description	Cost
Purchasing repair materials to be used (glue, string, tape, nails, screws, sandpaper, darning wool, thread, zips, etc.)	€ 150
Stocking up on materials	€ 100
Catering volunteers and invited people	€ 300
Printing publicity material + re-usable material to decorate the venue (posters, flyers)	€ 200
Small gift for volunteers	€ 100
Total	**€ 850**
Non-recurring costs:	
Extra expenses for festive opening event	€ 100

Town or city council

How can you raise money to cover costs? There are various options available to get financial support for your Repair Café. Perhaps your town or city council would be willing to financially back the initial stages of a local Repair Café. After all, the costs are not astronomical and Repair Café wishes to achieve goals that the council also finds very important. In fact, every council would like to teach its residents about the importance of adopting a sustainable lifestyle, to reduce non-recyclable waste, to improve social cohesion in neighbourhoods and to get groups of citizens who are unwillingly marginalised involved in community activities. In other words, make sure you approach your local council with your plans.

'Making repairs is often easier than you think'

Sponsors

Besides applying for a subsidy from the council you should try and find local sponsors. Get in touch with the local Lions Club or Rotary Club, a DIY store or a spare parts shop. To convince sponsors about the value of a Repair Café in your neighbourhood, and hence a good reason to sponsor the initiative, it's useful to keep tally of how many visitors there have been from the very first gathering, how many items were repaired and what they were, as well as visitors' reactions. Point out the guest book to people and

encourage them to leave their email address behind. When you have a visible following of enthusiastic fellow neighbours you have a much more powerful story to tell your potential sponsors. Don't forget to take photos! Photos of people repairing things, tables strewn with tools and happy visitors displaying their repaired items give an instantly convincing picture of the initiative to potential sponsors.

You can trawl the internet to gain inspiration in finding possible financial backers. Use Google or Wikipedia, for example, to find out about raising funds in your local council, borough or country.

Tip jar

You can also raise money during Repair Café gatherings. Actively point out the tip jar to visitors and tell them that their voluntary contribution is highly appreciated because the Repair Café cannot exist without funding. The Repair Café Foundation supplies posters you can hang near the tip jar. These posters encourage visitors who have received proper help to support the Repair Café by donating 5 euros. As it turns out, this suggestion works well in practice. Many visitors enjoy being able to show their appreciation and enthusiasm by donating money. They also appreciate being given a guideline on how much they should give. By specifying an amount, you place a value on the help offered. That's not a bad thing; some people see 'free' as being equal to 'rubbish', and you want to avoid that idea at all cost. It also prevents your Repair Café from being 'hijacked' by people who have no interest whatsoever in social sustainability, but simply want to get something for nothing.

Donors

Besides the tip jar, you can point out to visitors that they can become a donor to Repair Café. Design a flyer carrying this message and put it on the tables. Make sure you include the number of the bank account where people can transfer their donation to.

Entrance fee or no entrance fee?

Local organisers sometimes ask the Repair Café Foundation whether they can charge an entrance fee. Each local group is free to ask for a small entrance fee of 2 euros, for example. The disadvantage is that you create a barrier for people who have little money. But you also might put people off from just coming to have a look and finding out what a Repair Café is all about. Furthermore, you might ask yourself whether it goes against the grain of one of Repair Café's goals – to act as a meeting place. In short: the Repair Café Foundation discourages local organisers to charge entrance fees. Up until now, no local organiser has decided to do so.