

# Second-hand Clothes

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a bright yellow t-shirt, is looking towards the right. She is holding a light green quilted jacket. In the background, there are shelves filled with various shoes and a rack of clothes. The overall setting appears to be a second-hand clothing store or a market stall.

Our second-hand clothes collection contributes to reduction of waste, saves precious resources through reuse, provides affordable clothing to people in both hemispheres - and it ultimately enables us to undertake invaluable development work.

*Selling of second-hand clothes raises funds for social projects which contribute to Zambia's development*

## Collection and Sale of Second-hand Clothes

**For more than forty years we've collected, sorted and sold second-hand clothes.** This gives good clothes a longer lifespan and the sales proceeds support development projects across Africa, Asia and Central and South America. It starts with the 18 million people in Europe and the USA who with care and consideration decide to give clothes they no longer use as a donation in one of the clothes collection points. The clothes are passed on to sorting centres, where they are sorted into categories so that each piece of clothes will get to the highest level of reuse and raise the most funds, be it in a Vintage Shop in a European city, a thrift store in the USA, as wholesale bales in an African country, or in a seller's stall at the market place.

According to the World Bank (Sept. 2019), textiles produce 10% of the world's carbon emissions. It's also the second-largest consumer of the world's water supply. Giving clothes a longer lifecycle can help offset some of this negative environmental impact.

**The Humana People to People second-hand clothes system is a people-to-people system.** There is close contact between the sorting centres in Europe and the clothes sales projects in Africa. The care and effort put into the clothes at all stages from initial collection to sale in a shop is highly appreciated by those who are in the receiving end.

In 2022, we generated 23% of the funding for social projects from the Humana People to People second-hand clothes trade.

The collection and sorting entities in Europe and the USA perform an important service to society by taking 127 000 tons of textiles that can be reused or recycled out of the waste flow. They also create green jobs, and they make the collected clothes add to the circular economy in each country and across the continents. They can only do so, when they are economically sustainable in each link of the production chain, thus operating on general market conditions.



# 18M

people who donate

# 127 000

tonnes of clothes collected

# 11.4M

people bought second-hand clothes



# 553

shops in Europe and the USA

# 19M

people bought second-hand clothes



# 164

wholesale and retail shops in Africa and Belize



People in Europe and USA are afforded an opportunity to give unwanted clothes through a network of clothes collection bins

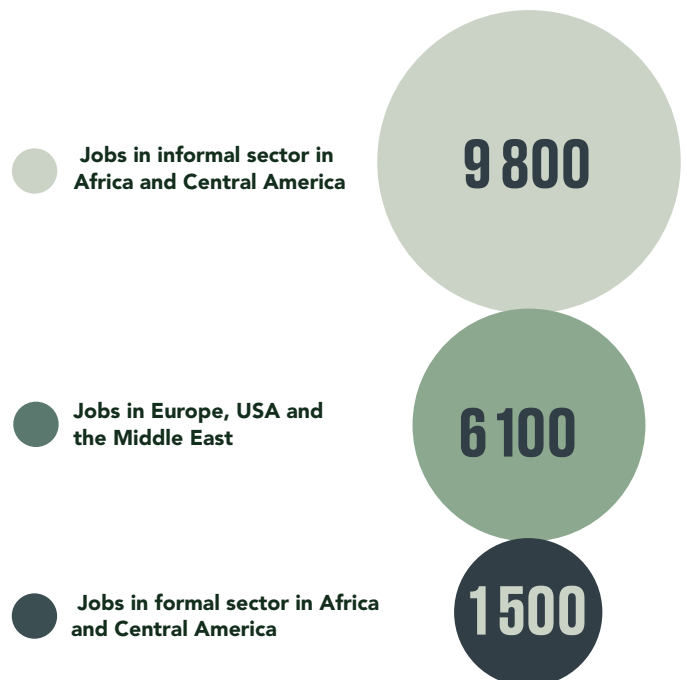
**Humana People to People second-hand clothes collections saved 777 000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2022 (6.1 tonnes per tonne collected).**

**The Humana People to People second-hand clothes business creates jobs. In Europe, the Middle East,** and the USA, 6 100 people work in collections, sorting centres and shops. They take good care of the collected clothes and make sure each item is put to the best possible use; reuse and recycling.

Around one quarter of the sorted clothes is sent for reuse to our members in Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea Bissau, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia in Africa and Belize in Central America, and to associates in Kenya and Uganda. Together with clothes being traded by associates in East and West Africa, the members create 11 300 jobs in logistics, sorting and sales, either as formal employment or in the informal sector linked to the trade and handling. Building business capacity through on-the-job training is a side effect of this job creation.

The end customers of the second-hand clothes are diverse. All over the world, people are turning to second-hand clothes as a way to help protect the planet, rather than buying new clothes. 11.4 million people bought second-hand clothing from our shops across Europe and the USA in 2022.

Across Africa, the clothes sales operations are located in both urban and rural areas, with customers from all walks of life. High end qualities are mostly sold in shops in the urban areas, while most of the clothes are sold in bales of e.g. 45 kg to small traders, who employ family members to take the clothing to the markets for sale. Clothes become a vehicle to reduce poverty, helping to create self-employment and jobs, learn new skills, and growing local and national economies.





*A local customer goes through a variety of used clothes in one of Humana Italy's vintage retail shops in Milan*

**To Humana People to People, transparency is an integral part of the operation.**

We follow what happens with the clothes, and we document it. The clothes are followed from the point of collection, through sorting centres and further on to the next customer.

In collections and sorting centres everything is counted or weighed. How much is collected, how much waste was taken out, how much was sorted into which categories, how much was put into second-hand shops, how much was exported,

and how much was put on stock.

The counting is the basis for voluntary system audits. Humana People to People entities use various audit and certification systems to document their activities, systems, and material streams. ISO certification, system audit by Bureau Veritas, Mepex Transparency Reporting and Global Reporting Initiative are some.

Finally, the procedures and the results are published. Cooperation partners and relevant authorities get agreed reports.



*Women frequently visit Humana shops to get quality, fashionable and affordable used clothes, Italy*

## Featuring our members – Humana People to People Italia



**Founded in 1998, Humana Italy operates in two non-profit entities, which operate jointly to support international cooperation in Africa and Asia as well as social and environmental projects in Italy.**

The vision of Humana Italy was developed in a collective creative process with management and employees of the organisation. It states:

***“A world where solidarity between people is at the centre of social and economic life and the community is capable of building its own future in balance with nature.”***

It is followed by their mission statement:

***“Humana Italy promotes the culture of solidarity and sustainable development.***

***Humana Italy finances and implements social development projects in the global south and contributes to environmental protection also through the collection, sale and donation of used clothes. Humana Italy is committed to increasing the capabilities of peoples and communities so that they become protagonists of their own future.”***

Over the last 25 years, Humana People to

People Italia s.c.a.r.l. has developed a transparent and verified supply chain for used textile; starting with the collection of second-hand clothes in collaboration with 1 200 municipalities. They sort the clothes for reuse and preparation for recycling in collaboration within the Humana People to People network and trusted partners. Today, Humana Italy has a chain of 12 vintage and second hand shops and one e-commerce, all promoting reuse. The ambition is to be part of changing how we look at fashion and to give people the opportunity to make more and more sustainable choices.

***“Our goal is to ensure that all clothing and footwear is used in the best possible way for the benefit of people and environment.”***

This statement is supported by facts: 67.5% of the collected clothes go for reuse, 25.5% for recycling, and 7% for energy recovery.

Humana Italy takes 21 000 tonnes (2022) of clothes out of the waste stream every year.

***“Our activities create green jobs promoting an inclusive and multicultural model.”***

This is evidenced by 220 jobs held by people of 29 different nationalities. In a Europe where division along ethnic lines becomes more and more dominant in certain political circles, this is a strong statement of its own. It is an important part of creating the dynamic working environment that characterises Humana Italy.

Humana People to People Italia ONLUS (NGO) together with its partners defines and implements humanitarian and environmental projects in Italy, Africa and Asia and forwards the surplus from the second-hand clothes operation to social development projects in the Humana People to People movement.

***“Humana Italy is committed to increasing the capacity of people and communities to become agents of their own future.”***

As an expression of this commitment, 1.2 million € (2022) from Humana Italy was donated to Humana People to People projects in education, health, community development and sustainable

agriculture in five countries.

Humana Italy stays in close contact with their Humana People to People partner organisations. For example, in August 2022, Humana Italy together with their partner Fondazione San Zeno visited the state of Jarkhand (India), where they financed a teacher training project carried out by Humana People to People India.

***“Transparency is vital to Humana Italy and we uphold the highest standards of accountability.”***

Humana Italy has been on the forefront in the second-hand clothes sector in establishing transparent systems of operation, both in Italy, in the EU and in the countries they support.

Controlling the entire supply chain, they are able to trace and report the destination of the clothes they collect. On their website they state: ***“For Humana Italy, transparency is a value. In fact, we have always considered it necessary to make all our activities traceable, through timely reporting actions, stories and dialogue with those who want to know what we have achieved, in the world as well as in Italy.”***

