

# Summary

## Preface

Repair Café International Foundation and the Dutch environmental organisation Natuur & Milieu have done research after products that have been offered for repair at Repair Cafés. In 2017, 2347 products were brought in at 12 Repair Cafés. In the research, it was investigated how fast and why products break. Obstacles for repair were identified as well. This was done to provide tools for making products more repairable.

## Analysis

The ten products mostly presented at Repair Cafés are bicycles, coffee machines, vacuum cleaners, trousers, lamps, irons, laptops, kettles, sewing machines and printers. The ten most common brands are Philips, Bosch, Sony, Tefal, Miele, Gazelle, HP, Samsung, Braun and Nespresso.

The over all repair rate of the presented products is quite high: 65%. The success rate of electrical appliance repairs - 55% - is lower than that of non-electrical appliances and other products. Non-electrical repairs have a success rate of nearly 90%. Repair Café repairers give products a high reparability rating: an average of 6.9 on a 1 to 10 scale. Non-electric products are valued higher: they receive a 7.8.

When an item could not be repaired, there were many different obstacles. Often parts were not repairable, not available or too expensive. Sometimes repair was not possible or too complicated. In some cases, a product could not be disassembled at all. It also happened that the cause of the defect could not be found. Sometimes a part of a product had broken off and could no longer be repaired.

The variation in age of products brought to Repair Cafés is great. In a quarter of the cases, an article that was brought to a Repair Café is a maximum of three years old. Three-quarters of these products are electrical appliances. Of the electrical appliances, kettles and printers are offered for repair soonest after purchase. Sewing machines last longest before being taken to a Repair Café, followed by lamps and bicycles.

Repair information was rarely available. In only 16% of the cases where information was sought, repair manuals were actually found.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Repairing stuff (or having it repaired) is meaningful. This research shows that in 65% of the cases repair worked. Of the top ten products, only two products have a success rate of less than 50%.

For some devices, a lack of maintenance by the user was the likely cause of the defect. After cleaning, a product often worked again. This shows the

importance of good and regular maintenance and the importance of communication about maintaining products properly.

It is necessary to develop more sustainable business models. For some products the revenue model for producers is mainly in selling parts (e.g. cartridges for printers or cups for coffee machines), as a result of which it is suspected that the products themselves are of low quality. This dataset shows that printers and certain coffee machines do indeed break quickly and are difficult to repair.

In order to realize sustainable revenue models, incentives towards sustainability are needed. There must be (financial) incentives that ensure that it pays to produce things that last a long time and are easily repairable. Parts must be available for a reasonable price. This can be done, for example, by increasing the tax on resources and reducing the tax on labor.

Based on this analysis and conclusions, we make the following recommendations:

## **For producers:**

- Make sure that products are easily repairable. This can be done by designing products that can be disassembled.
- Ensure a wider availability of reasonably priced spare parts.
- Ensure availability of comprehensive repair manuals and offer the corresponding tools as well.
- Provide clear information about the maintenance of devices and make sure that this is also communicated in the shop.
- Think about revenue models that make it (financially) attractive to sell sustainable products.

## **For consumers:**

- Pay attention to what kind of items you buy. Rather buy a more expensive product that lasts longer than something cheap with a bigger chance of breaking quickly.
- Ensure regular and proper maintenance. This can prevent part of the defects.
- Is a product broken? Then try to repair it (or have it repaired). This research shows that repair is successful in more than half of the cases.

## **For the government and other parties:**

- Provide the right incentives for promoting reparability, such as a higher tax on resources – which will make products more expensive - and a lower tax on labor. It will then become cheaper to repair products (or have them repaired) than to buy new ones.
- Set requirements for the design of products, so that reparability / disassembly is taken into account.
- Provide for the dissemination of repair skills, so that more people learn how products and appliances can be repaired.