Phase II

Textile Transformation Nova Scotia



Part 2 of 3

Donation Etiquette Analysis | Summary

by **Charlotte Genge** and **Dr. John Fiset**

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NACTR

Read the full reports at www.nactr.ca

Why do people donate clothes?

HOW DO DONATION BEHAVIOURS CONTRIBUTE TO PREVENTABLE TEXTILE WASTE?

KEY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

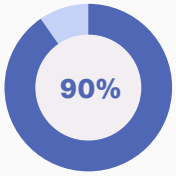
Demographics of Textile Donors

Who responded to the survey?

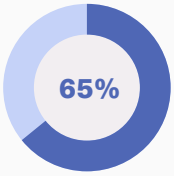
1,607 people recruited nationally completed the survey – 97.9% of them have donated textiles before, and 93.6% shopped at a thrift store in the past year. **This demonstrates there is an engaged audience of individuals familiar with thrift retail.**

Provinces of residence:

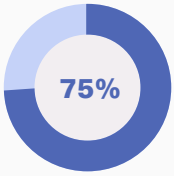
- **Nova Scotia:** 41% (658 surveys)
- **Alberta:** 20% (315 surveys)
- **Ontario:** 17% (274 surveys)
- **Other Provinces & Territories:** 22% (360 surveys)



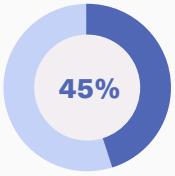
of respondents identified as **women**



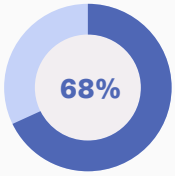
of respondents were aged **45 or older**



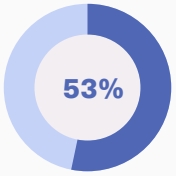
have some **post-secondary** credential



of respondents report income **above $90,000**



live within **5 km** of a donation location



willing to travel more than **11 km** to donate

Intentions

The survey found that the top three things people consider important when donating textiles are **good physical condition**, **cleanliness**, and **usability**.

We also asked people to rank their motivations for donating textiles, looking at **intrinsic** and **extrinsic** factors.

The findings were consistent with the stated intentions: **people want to do the right thing**.

vs. Reality

The waste characterization data reveals a gap between what people say they do and the quality of what organizations actually receive.

19.4% were unwearable without minor interventions like cleaning or small repairs

31.5% had at least one minor, donor-preventable issue

33.6% were unwearable – in need of major repairs, end of life, or contaminated

Motivations



What is good donation etiquette?

HOW CAN DONOR BEHAVIOUR EXTEND THE LIFE OF TEXTILES?

STUDY METHODOLOGY AT A GLANCE

The Integrated Analysis of Synthesized Data from Three Areas

National Donation Behaviour Survey

The survey was designed to examine behaviours that influence textile reuse outcomes. Through a combination of organic recruitment and paid advertising, **1,607 individual self-reported responses** were recorded and analysed.

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Integration of Waste Characterization Study Data

Across NS's seven solid waste-resource management regions, **4,664 donated textile items** were assessed to determine: condition grade, damage types, repair needs, and potential ways to keep items in circulation longer.

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Semi-Structured Interviews

Thrift and reuse organizations across Canada were asked to define good donation behaviour and to list items they find difficult to sell. Via video conference, **12 interviews** were conducted with textile collectors, sorters, wholesalers, and thrift retailers.

Four Dimensions of Donation Etiquette

1 Ensuring Donated Items are Suitable for Reuse

Making sure donations are clean and useable.

- **Do** make sure what you donate is in good condition, and make small repairs if you can
- **Don't** leave items unattended outside where they can become wet or damaged

2 Exercising Responsible Donor Judgement

Being intentional about what is donated where.

- **Do** give thought to wear you donate, and contact them with questions if needed
- **Don't** drop off items without being sure that your donation can be accepted

3 Considering Recipient Needs and Preferences

Donating items that people need and want.

- **Do** consider quality, style, and seasonality when you donate
- **Don't** donate items that have reached the end of their life cycle

4 Facilitating Efficient Donation Processing

Considering sorting and preparation systems.

- **Do** clean and fold your clothes before donating, and double check pockets
- **Don't** overload bags or mix textiles in with other items that could contaminate them

How can we positively influence behaviour?

CALLS TO ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SMALL CHANGES CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Many of the Most Common Defects are Preventable by Donors



Key Recommendations

Deliver a coordinated, province-wide donation etiquette campaign with consistent messaging.
(BEH-1, BEH-6)

Support future Extended Producer Responsibility policy through public education that reinforces shared responsibility across consumers, charities, and producers.
(BEH-2)

Use community collection events and partnerships with schools, libraries, and municipalities to reinforce best practices over time.
(BEH-3)

Build standardized sector data and reporting on disposal volumes, rejection rates, and downstream losses to track progress and strengthen the case for change.
(BEH-4)

Explore repair-to-resale infrastructure for items in need of a minor repair as a complementary, sector-level investment.
(BEH-5)

Expand public education on what happens to donated textiles, and the impact of better donation etiquette, to close the post-donation knowledge gap.
(BEH-7)

Reform donation bin practices through clearer signage and an enforced Code of Conduct to help reduce the quality gap between donation bins and donations received at staffed donation centres.
(BEH-8)

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Environment and Climate Change Canada | Environnement et Changement climatique Canada

Textile Transformation Nova Scotia Phase II | Summaries

1 Waste Characterization Study

2 Donation Etiquette Analysis

3 End-Use Pathways Brief

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