

## Delterra and The Circulate Initiative Release New Report that provides roadmap for promoting Pro-Recycling Behavior Change in the global south

- Analysis of three recycling projects in the global south reveals that a combination of infrastructure and engagement initiatives can address common barriers.
- The research is the second in a series that aims to demonstrate the potential of behavior change to improve the economics of recycling.



APR. 20, 2022 – Washington, D.C. – Today, two international environmental nonprofits, Delterra and The Circulate Initiative, unveiled new insights into recycling behavior change in their report: ["Honing the Habit: Four Insights on Spreading Recycling Behavior"](#).

The study follows a three-year investigation by Delterra's Rethinking Recycling initiative, which is focused on building waste management and recycling systems in the global south. Conducted across three projects in Indonesia and Argentina, the research revealed four key insights that can help to create a blueprint for change in other countries with limited existing recycling infrastructure and practices.

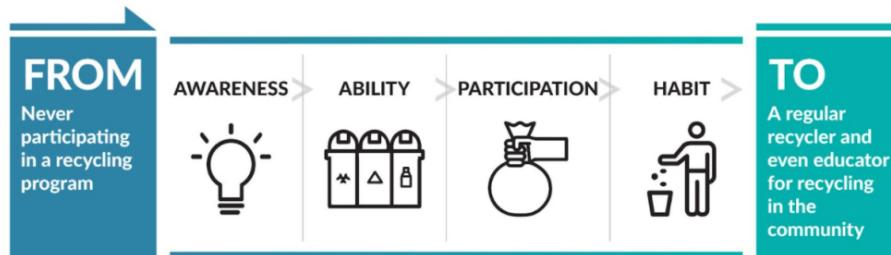
Despite a growing global recognition of the need to move to a circular economy, the global recycling rate has [stagnated at around 8.6 percent](#), creating a pervasive supply shortage of recyclables.

The shortage puts corporate recycling commitments increasingly at risk even as the urgency of combating waste pollution grows. With 80 percent of post-consumer waste able to be recycled, this report provides promising insights that can be applied across cities and communities to ensure more waste is within reach of the recycling industry.

### Four key insights from the “Honing the Habit” Report

1. **Insight #1: To take the idea of recycling seriously, people need to see that their community’s recycling infrastructure and services are here to stay.** In the communities we work in, we have identified three infrastructure elements essential for building trust in a recycling system: collection schedule, collection logistics, and community materials.
2. **Insight #2: Promoting recycling is not a cut-and-paste effort. Each community needs emotionally-rooted appeals that resonate with their specific values and priorities.** To really motivate a community to recycle, we design messages and campaigns that speak to the unique culture and context of each area.
3. **Insight #3: Mass communication is not enough. Personal engagement is what drives real behavior change.** While “top-down” communication provides awareness and legitimacy for an initiative, “bottom up” face-to-face interactions and ongoing support resources motivate people to change their daily behaviors.
4. **Insight #4: A rapid “test and learn” approach is critical for identifying the most effective interventions.** Rapid testing of a range of options is essential to successfully tailoring a program to the local context.

### RECYCLING BEHAVIOR JOURNEY: A COMBINATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES CAN ADDRESS COMMON BARRIERS AT EACH STEP



The research, conducted across an informal settlement, Barrio Mugica in Buenos Aires, a set of urban districts in southern Bali, and the mid-sized Argentinian city of Olavarría, saw a curbside-collection recycling service introduced to communities for the first time. Although communities differ in how their residents think about recycling and what motivates them to separate waste, important common learnings can be gleaned.

“In order to make local recycling systems work and become profitable over time, long-lasting behavior change is necessary,” said Delterra’s President and CEO Shannon Bouton. “Through our work in Indonesia and Argentina over the past three years, we have been able to identify strategies to encourage pro-recycling behaviors in diverse communities, and collaborate with stakeholders and local partners in implementing tactics to recover more material for recycling and facilitate positive change.”

Ellen Martin, Director of Impact and Insights at The Circulate Initiative said: “Behavior change is not typically thought of as an investable opportunity, yet this analysis highlights how key interventions can make or break a recycling program. It is clear from our research that the impacts of pro-recycling behaviors can be



seen in the amount of valuable material that can be recovered for recycling and in the communities themselves."

Alliance to End Plastic Waste, Amcor, RARE's Center for Behavior & the Environment and The Recycling Partnership collaborated with Delterra and The Circulate Initiative on this report, the second in a series of behavior change reports scheduled for release this year.

The "Honing the Habit: Four Insights on Spreading Recycling Behavior" [report can be downloaded in its entirety here](#). For more information on Delterra, and its groundbreaking Rethinking Recycling initiative, please visit [www.delterra.org](http://www.delterra.org).

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#### About Delterra

Delterra is an environmental nonprofit on a mission to create a world where human activities protect and restore a healthy planet. Delterra's founding partner is McKinsey & Company, and its flagship initiative, Rethinking Recycling, works with communities in emerging economies to build rapidly scalable, self-sustaining waste management and recycling ecosystems that redirect waste into productive use while improving the lives of the people it touches. In the coming years, Delterra will add other initiatives to its portfolio, all with a view to developing innovative scalable solutions that redesign human systems for the good of people and the planet. Learn more at: <https://www.delterra.org>

#### About The Circulate Initiative

The Circulate Initiative is a non-profit organization committed to solving the ocean plastic pollution challenge by supporting the incubation of circular, inclusive and investible waste management and recycling systems in South and Southeast Asia. We achieve this by collaborating with key stakeholders across the sector, and by producing insights to support and accelerate investment and scale across the value chain. Learn more: <https://www.thecirculateinitiative.org/>

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