

Social Innovation Spotlight



Episode 01

From packaging waste to conscious shopping

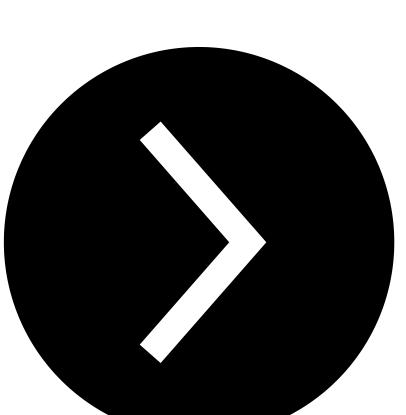
A zero-waste store in Romania that turns everyday shopping into a way to live – and learn – more sustainably.



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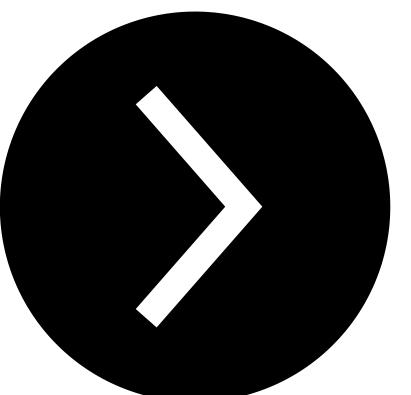
Social Innovation +
Initiative

seed2scale



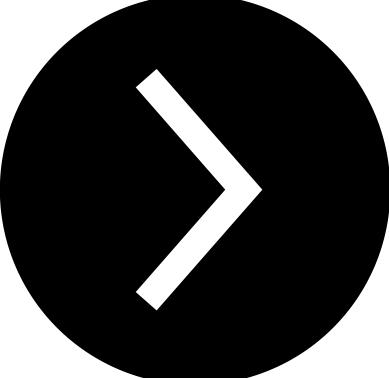
The challenge

- **Overpackaged goods** and single-use plastics create unnecessary waste.
- People who want to reduce their ecological footprint **struggle to find everyday, zero-waste options.**
- Local producers and **artisans lack platforms** to meet sustainability-minded customers.
- Environmental education and community engagement around sustainable living are still limited.



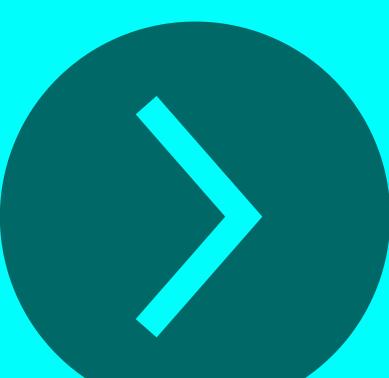
The idea

AER (AerLocal) is a Romanian retail and community initiative that combines a zero-waste store, artisan bakery, café and green space to make sustainable consumption part of daily life.



What's innovative here?

- **Hybrid model:** brings together zero-waste retail, bakery, café and community education in one concept.
- **Bulk and refill system:** customers bring their own containers to cut packaging waste.
- **Values-based sourcing:** works with local, small-scale suppliers that share strong sustainability principles.
- **Profits for the community:** earnings are reinvested into environmental and community education projects.



Impact so far

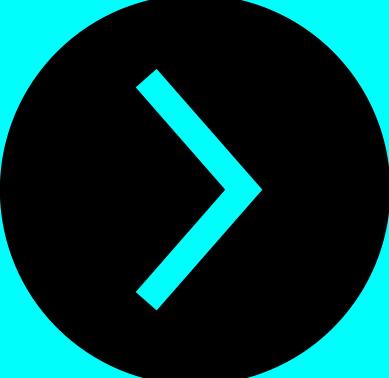
Less packaging waste through bulk products and  refill practices.

Compostable or reusable packaging  throughout the store and bakery.

Food waste prevented via moderate  production, transforming surplus and working with anti-waste platforms.



Environmental

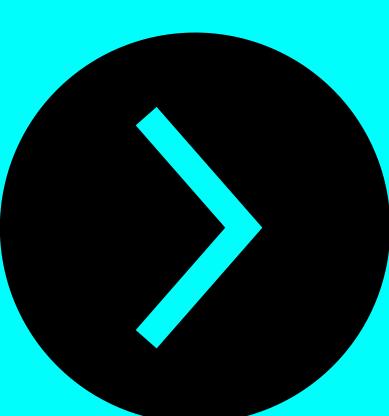


Impact so far

A welcoming community space that encourages  sustainable living.

Educational programmes and workshops for children  and adults, such as ecological education activities.

Dedicated initiatives that give visibility and  support to local producers and artisans.



Impact so far

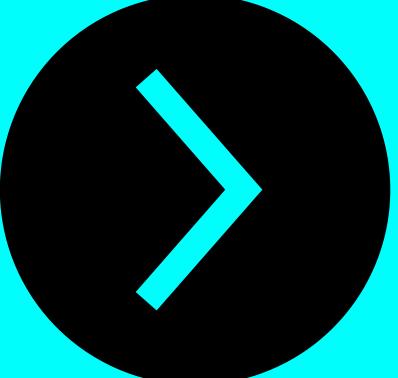
Support for the local economy by prioritizing local  and small-scale suppliers.

Reinvestment of profits into community and  educational initiatives.

Development of a business model that links  commercial activity with positive social and environmental impact.

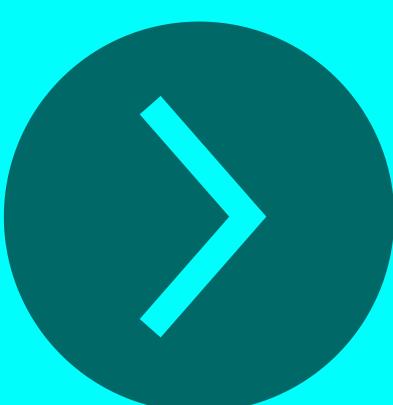


**Economic
&
community**



What you can replicate

- Combine zero-waste retail, food and community activities to reach a wider audience and build resilience.
- Introduce bulk sales and refill systems in existing shops to reduce packaging waste.
- Use compostable or reusable packaging and clear communication to normalise sustainable choices.
- Partner with local producers and anti-waste platforms to support the local economy and prevent food waste.



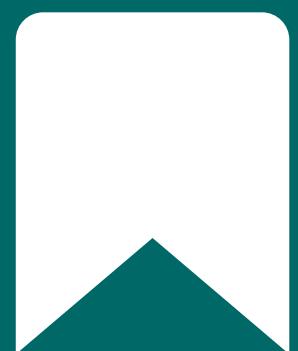
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**If this case sparked an idea,
don't let it stay on this slide.**

**Adapt it, remix it, and bring social
innovation to life where you are.**

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