



## Where your clothing goes

Through the efforts of Better Earth Textile Recycling and many other similar organizations, the world's poorest people have access to the clothing they need. Thanks to smart efficiencies and innovative equipment, an individual on the east coast of Africa earning just \$200 a year can buy a pair of clean, gently used pants for just \$.34. In Pakistan, sweaters can be purchased for about \$.12 each — far less than the cost of mailing a letter.

Overly worn or stained clothing is re-purposed to become wiping and polishing cloths for use in manufacturing and other industries. Cotton is made into rags or used to form a component for new high-quality paper. Knitted or woven woolens and similar materials are "pulled" into a fibrous state for reuse by the textile industry in applications, such as car insulation or seat stuffing. Other types of fabric are reprocessed into fibers for upholstery, insulation, and even building materials. Buttons and zippers are stripped off for reuse. Very little remains at the end of the recycling process.

**Ready to get started? Contact Tim Engel at 414.716.5755 or [tim@betrearth.com](mailto:tim@betrearth.com).**

## Why it matters

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that an average person throws away 70 lbs. of clothing every year.
- Only 15% of textile materials are re-purposed — leaving 85% to end up as waste. That means that every year, 85% of all discarded textiles — over 21 billion lbs. — is sent to U.S. landfills.
- Clothing and household textiles currently make up about 5% of the waste stream.
- Combined, textile recycling organizations like BETR keep approximately 2.5 billion lbs. of waste out of landfills every year.
- More than 60% of recovered textiles are sent abroad to over 250 countries, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs worldwide.
- The sale of used clothing creates jobs and affordable apparel in many lesser developed countries. A great number of people in these countries earn their livelihood by selling used clothing.



**Better Earth**  
TEXTILE RECYCLING