

THRIVABLE INSIGHTS FROM THE THRIVABILITY MATTERS WEBINAR

Hi, passionate thrivability enthusiast. We live in unprecedented times. The numbers prove that climate change is here to stay. Social injustices corrupt the very fabric of our society, and misinformation and false narratives clog our devices through mainstream and social media. It's important to have reliable information from people who stand to gain nothing from sharing it with you. A person's agenda defines their motivation. THRIVE's agenda is to assist others to build a thrivable future, while our passionate volunteers walk the talk to deliver an authenticity that is difficult to find elsewhere.

Every month, THRIVE delivers a knowledge-filled [webinar](#), straight to your screens, providing statistics, facts, tips, tricks, and hints on how we can solve the problems our world faces everyday. from new innovations and discoveries, to the actions that people and communities take every day to make our world just a little more thrivable.

Each month, a particular solution is unpacked, disseminated, and investigated, to see how it applies to us and how we can play as a global team, on the playing field of Earth, to reach these goals. It isn't enough for us to sit passively by and let governments and businesses make our decisions for us. After all, their motivation is driven by their agenda. What does that mean for us?

Our aim is to arm you with the knowledge to change from being simply sustainable to terrifically thrivable. Therefore, I'd like to introduce you to Polina Efimova. She was an esteemed guest for the February 2024 Thrivability Matters Webinar who spoke to us on SDG12: Responsible Consumption and Production. Polina's focus was on the circular built environment and architecture. The thrivable insights that follow are her precious pearls of wisdom that she generously shared with us during the Q&A session that follows every webinar.

INTRODUCING POLINA EFIMOVA

РІВН



Polina Efimova graduated from the Land Management University of Russia and is an architect and the CEO at A.iT, but she is an environmentalist at heart.

She is also a specialist in circular economy in the building environment. There, her work is founded in implementing circular principles in architecture and design, where each unique design or project strives to improve the quality of life by promoting sustainable and responsible behaviour towards the environment. Polina's work extends into the heart of her community where she organised the "Architecture and Nature" forums for upcoming young architects from 2010 to 2011 and worked as an art director at the Inform Agency Architect of Union.

Please share your thoughts about circular economy principles being introduced at school level. And what do you think could be the impact?

I think it's important to introduce knowledge about this theme in schools on different levels. I could speak about primary school - I was surprised that the program on the environment has information about the sectors of the economy and their influence on nature and practical discussions about what we can do. It's great when children can also think creatively about solutions, make a project, and personally deepen their knowledge of the topic they are interested in. Also, children return home and ask their parents for help, especially in elementary school. These could motivate the entire family to broaden their horizons and look for alternatives in everyday life, even within their own household.



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We understand “decoupling“ in simple terms means separating two things that were connected. In other words, reducing dependencies.

However, there can be instances where reducing interdependencies between extrusion and development would be very difficult. To this end, how can we tackle that challenge?

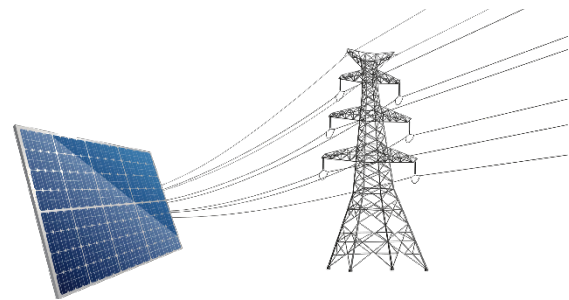
I think the reduction of interdependencies between extrusion and development will be very difficult. There are many products in the built environment that are difficult to restore or put into a biological or technical cycle to prolong their circularity.

They consist of complex composites, an adhesive that may not even be able to cascade due to the substances. However, metals have a great potential for secondary use and will be important due to dedicated

growing demand. Also, the circularity is about systems and the opportunity to provide for more people, whether a product or a service.

There is great potential in the urban development of services in public-private partnerships.

For example, you couldn't afford to buy solar panel or install it on your apartment building, but you could choose to use energy from renewables from your energy provider. Cities have opportunities to stimulate circular economy, circular procurement, and public private partnership for implementing business models with long-term capture of value.



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What challenges do you see with the growth of developing and specially underdeveloped countries, especially when it conflicts with reducing emissions?

Developed countries have a better level of life and higher levels of consumption. In contrast, people in

developing and underdeveloped countries may not even meet minimal adequate standards of living. They need more materials and resources to build schools or hospitals to achieve a decent level of medicine, sanitation, education, infrastructure, etc. We need to look deeper to find better solutions to help countries reduce their emissions and stimulate sustainability. All countries are unique in geographical position, culture, and history.

Rules and measurements are important, but we should think more about each unique situation to achieve common goals. National taxonomies, green and social, help a nation's society to understand main goals and navigate paths forward due to understanding of main directions and prioritising projects.

What about suggestions that regenerative design development can go beyond sustainability to create thriving and resilient communities? Or in simpler words, how can communities not only stay the same, but become even better with the idea of regenerative design development?

If you read book *Cradle to Cradle* by William McDonough and

Michael Braungart, they say that human systems can approach the effectiveness of living systems where waste doesn't exist because each organism contributes to the health of the whole. We could be more effective than just reducing air and water pollution, for example, by converting waste back into nutrients for food production.

I think stimulation of local creativity and long-term systems thinking could help to bring us closer to this image of the future. Redesigning of products and relationships in system is a challenge, but knowledge of biomimicry and sometimes traditional techniques could open new possibilities. The potential benefits of ecosystems and nature are significant. We need to sync with its possibilities so we can support an acceptable framework of climate conditions for us.



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Circular infrastructure aims to create systems that are regenerative, sustainable, and contribute positively to the environment and society. How difficult do you think it is to integrate this system to already existing / aging infrastructure?

It's quite difficult, but it's possible. There are many examples of creating roadmaps at the city level to rebuild supply chains. Our artificial systems (cities) could analyse their flows and build processes where nutrients safely return in nature and technical materials circulate preserving value and prolonging usage. Preventive maintenance, reparability (where you can replace a part without throwing away the whole product), and the procurement of products and services, are also important steps when you choose a supplier, and criteria that help you to move in these directions.



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In order to make sure that resources are continuously reused rather than used once and discarded, how can governments play a role to promote and support circular design strategies to enhance sustainability in development projects?

Are there any examples from governments to enhance sustainability through policies?

There are a lot of examples. I like the Buiksloterham region in Amsterdam and Fab City in Barcelona. Also, there are several projects in Russia that I think are not typical. One of them I described in a speech – the education and acceleration program where people are asked to find abandoned buildings, and learned how to create a creative cluster. The best buildings are renovated ones because of the optimisation of embodied and operation carbon emissions. It stimulates new economies and returns this place to the city. So, this example has a huge impact on communities in the cities across Russia and has saved millions square metres of already constructed buildings from being demolished.



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We can't wait to see you there.
Keep on thriving!

*Thank
You*

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