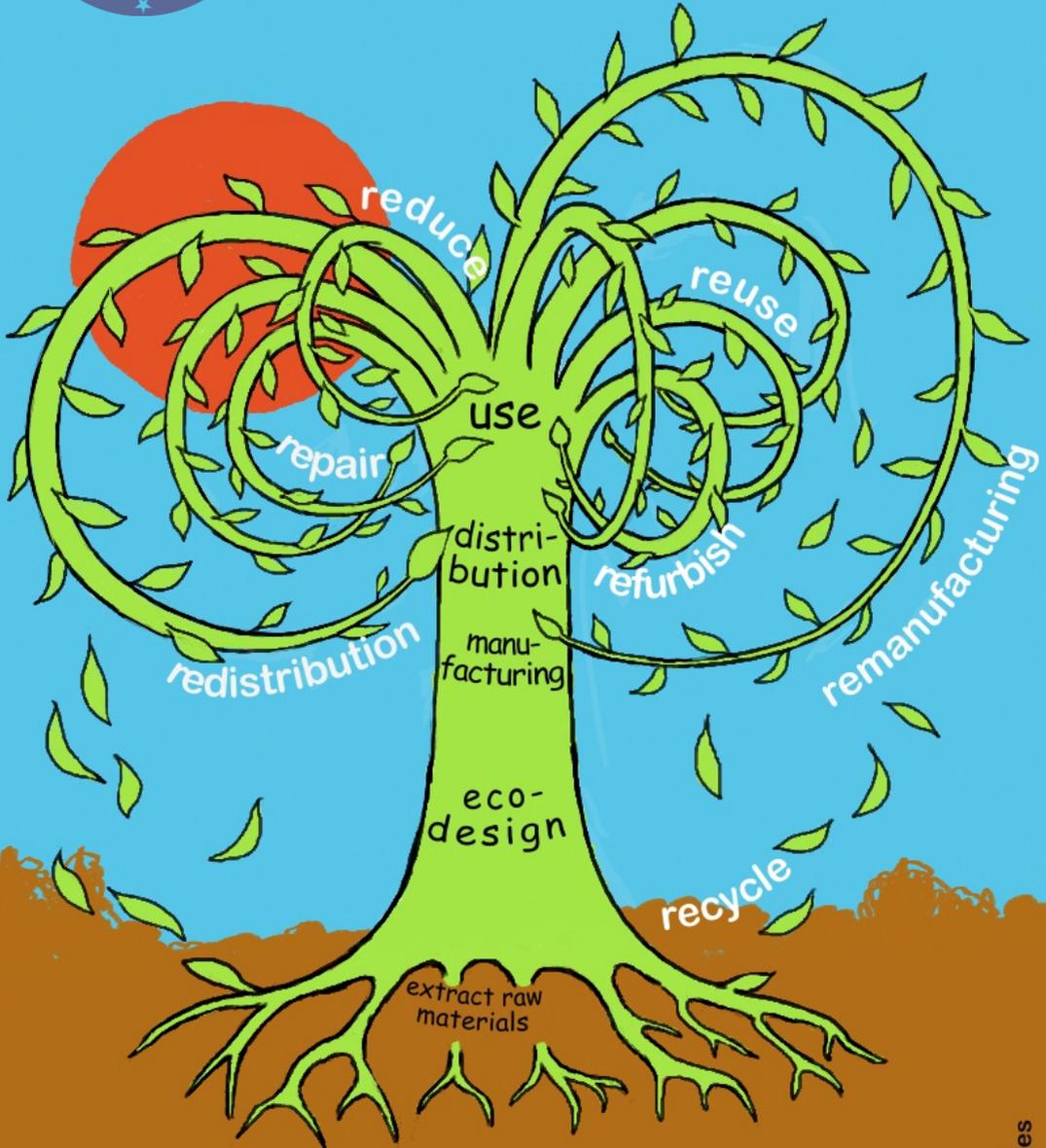




Quaker  
Council for  
European  
Affairs



The circular economy

## **What is the circular economy?**

The circular economy is the opposite of the linear economic model, which is based on extracting materials, using them, and then discarding them. Waste is built into this unsustainable system, which is premised on the view that humans can and should dominate the Earth.

By contrast, the circular economy aims to maintain the value of resources for as long as possible, firstly by preventing waste from being created at all, and then by extending the useful lifetime of everyday products. Sharing and leasing products can reduce our individual resource consumption. Once products have been created, they should be reused, repaired, redistributed and upgraded to ensure the product or material lasts for as long as possible. When a product has reached the end of its useful life, recycling can feed useful materials back into the economy to be used again in new products. It's important that recycling is deferred as long as possible, to avoid premature loss of value. The European Union is currently in the process of designing legislation to transition from a linear to a circular economy.

## **Why does it matter?**

As Quakers we believe that “we do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will.” (*BYM Advices & Queries* 42) We are called instead to show a loving consideration for all life, and to act as its careful stewards, particularly as many resources are finite, and dwindling. The circular economy recognises natural resources' value, and manages them more carefully.

## **What are the benefits?**

As well as increasing the efficiency with which we use resources, it should reduce our total resource consumption and - eventually - eliminate waste. It will also reduce our energy consumption, bring economic savings to businesses, reduce our dependence on imported materials, create local jobs and improve health if hazardous substances are eliminated.

## **What is QCEA doing?**

QCEA is working with other NGOs to promote an ambitious and environmentally focussed package, as the legislation is developed at the European level.

## **Interested?**

- Find out more at [www.qcea.org](http://www.qcea.org) and on our blog: [qceablog.wordpress.com/category/sustainability](http://qceablog.wordpress.com/category/sustainability)
- Subscribe to QCEA's newsletter *Around Europe* to keep up to date.
- Invite a speaker from QCEA to talk to your Quaker Meeting, or at your event.