

Fondation SapoCycle

CREATION: SEPTEMBER 2014
HEADQUARTERS: BASEL



BUBBLES SAVING LIVES



OUR STORY IN BRIEF

SEPTEMBER 2014

SapoCycle Founded in Switzerland

APRIL 2015

Launch of the Recycling Line at
Stiftung WohnWerk in Basel,
Switzerland

FEBRUARY 2016

First distribution of recycled soaps in
Cameroon and Belarus

MARCH 2018

Start SapoCycle France with a
recycling line at Adapei Papillons
Blancs in Alsace

JANUARY 2022

Launch of the liquid program in
Switzerland: collection and repurpose
of used shower gel, shampoo, and
conditioner bottles and tubes from
Swiss hotels

DECEMBRE 2023

Inauguration SapoCycle Germany: the
first social franchise in Germany

AUGUST 2025

SapoCycle celebrates **10 years** of
impact: nearly **420.000 recycled
soap bars** and **15.000 liters** of liquid
hygiene products distributed, helping
around **120.000 families access
essential hygiene.**

CHALLENGE

- Between 130 and 150 tons of used hotel soaps are incinerated each year in Switzerland.
- 8% of the population in Switzerland lives below the poverty line (2020). This is structural poverty.
- 800 children die every day worldwide from diseases caused by lack of access to water and soap.

OUR APPROACH

SapoCycle is a pioneering public-interest program in Europe that collects discarded hotel soaps and transforms them into life-saving hygiene products. Soaps are carefully recycled, and liquid hygiene items are reconditioned by people with disabilities, then distributed to improve the sanitary conditions of families in need.

By connecting stakeholders from the hospitality industry, emergency relief, and social integration sectors, SapoCycle creates collaborative initiatives around the circular economy; partnerships that would not have emerged without our program.

OUR IMPACT

Our program is built on three core pillars:



ENVIRONMENTAL: Recycling used hotel soaps reduces CO₂ emissions by 90% compared to incineration (Source: FHNW Switzerland, 2016).



SOCIAL : In collaboration with our recycling workshops, we provide people with disabilities a stable workplace and a meaningful role in the economy.



SOLIDARITY: We facilitate access to soap for families in need across Europe and other parts of the world, helping them improve their health and well-being.

WHY US ?

Dorothee Schiesser, a hotelier's wife and journalist, lived in Cameroon, where she was struck by the lack of hygiene education. She also became aware of waste management challenges in hotels.

Inspired by similar programs in Asia and the United States—which were largely unknown in Europe—she developed a process to recycle used hotel soaps and distribute them to people in need. A key differentiator was her decision to work with adults with disabilities. SapoCycle was founded in Switzerland in 2014, expanded to France in 2018, and then to Germany as the first social franchise of SapoCycle in 2023. The organization continues to pursue replication in other countries, bringing its highly effective, threefold impact program to more communities.



We have developed a multi-stream economic model:

- Hotel subscriptions: an annual fee which partially covers transport and recycling costs
- Corporate sponsorship & gifts: soaps provided in exchange for donations
- Donation shop: individual online contributions
- Grants & foundation funding: project-based or endowment support

OUR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In 2015, the UN Member States established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030.

SapoCycle contributes to at least 5 of these goals.



AREAS WHERE WE NEED SUPPORT

- To reach even more people in difficult situations and provide them with care and comfort through our hygiene products.
- For the development of our social franchises: seeking new partners in other European countries, support, monitoring, and communication.
- For the recovery and reprocessing of industrial cosmetic production waste.

OUR KEYWORDS

Circular economy, ecological transition, waste reduction, innovation, synergy and collaboration among stakeholders, solidarity, health, disease prevention, hygiene, hospitality industry.

OUR KEY FIGURES 2025

80

Participating Hotels
(90 in Switzerland)



31.000 KG

Used soaps collected
(of which 29,600 come from Swiss hotels)



21.600 KG

de petits tubes de
shampooing et gels
douches collectés



210.000 SAVONS

recyclés et distribués (of
which 270.000 in Switzerland)



14.780 LITRES

de gel douche, shampooing et
après-shampooing
reconditionnés et distribués
(only in Switzerland)



63 TONNES

de CO2 économisés

10

adults with disabilities
involved in the recycling
process(6-8 in Switzerland)



55.000

Families supported with
access to hygiene products
(of which 70.473 with
Swiss products)

