# LIVING LEGACIES: ENTREPRENEURIAL MODELS FOR CIRCULAR MEMORIAL ECONOMIES IN THE AGE OF CLIMATE CONSCIOUSNESS

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# INTRODUCTION:

## 🌍 Context

Traditional memorial practices often leave a heavy ecological footprint.

Climate change and sustainability demands are reshaping how societies engage with deathcare.

## ♻️ Circular Economy Lens

Promotes reuse, regeneration, and minimal waste.

Applied to memorial economies: biodegradable materials, natural burials, renewable memorial spaces.

# RETHINKING DEATH IN A CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS AGE

- Climate change and urbanisation challenge conventional cemetery and funeral models.
- Linear deathcare practices are land-intensive and environmentally harmful.
- Emergence of Circular Memorial Economies (CMEs) reframes the end of life as a regenerative process.
- CMEs integrate eco-entrepreneurship, cultural sensitivity, and sustainability.

# PROBLEM STATEMENT & GAP

Traditional deathcare practices, such as conventional burials and cremations, are increasingly unsustainable due to their land intensive nature, high carbon emissions, and reliance on non-biodegradable materials. Rapid urbanisation and climate change further exacerbate the ecological and spatial challenges associated with conventional funeral models. While the circular economy has gained traction across multiple industries, its application to the deathcare sector remains limited, with insufficient exploration of entrepreneurial models that integrate eco-innovation, cultural sensitivity, and sustainability. This gap highlights the need to reimagine memorial practices through circular memorial economies that align with climate-conscious values while fostering new opportunities for green entrepreneurship.

# RESEARCH AIM

TO EXPLORE HOW ECO-ENTREPRENEURIAL MODELS ARE TRANSFORMING DEATHCARE INTO CIRCULAR, SUSTAINABLE, AND CULTURALLY MEANINGFUL MEMORIAL SYSTEMS.

# OBJECTIVES

To conceptualise Circular Memorial Economies within the framework of the circular economy.

To analyse emerging entrepreneurial innovations in sustainable deathcare.

To map stakeholder involvement in climate-conscious memorial practices.

To evaluate the social, cultural, and ecological impacts of CMEs.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the defining features of Circular Memorial Economies?
- How do entrepreneurs innovate within the deathcare sector to promote ecological regeneration?
- What are the socio-cultural and emotional implications of these innovations?
- What role do policies and stakeholders play in enabling or constraining these models?

# METHODOLOGY

APPROACH:

MIXED-METHODS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON QUALITATIVE SYNTHESIS

RESEARCH DESIGN: EXPLORATORY AND THEORY-GENERATING

PHILOSOPHICAL ORIENTATION: CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY AND CRITICAL SYSTEMS THINKING

DATA SOURCES:

GLOBAL CASE STUDIES (2010–2024)

SECONDARY LITERATURE

INDUSTRY AND POLICY REPORTS

# TOOLS AND INSTRUMENTS

KEY TOOLS USED:

CONTENT ANALYSIS: THEMATIC CODING OF FUNERAL INNOVATIONS AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

ECO-INNOVATION MAPPING: VISUALISING SUSTAINABILITY LOOPS AND VALUE CHAINS

SYSTEMS MODELLING: MAPPING STAKEHOLDER NETWORKS AND CIRCULAR FEEDBACK LOOPS

COMPARATIVE CASE SYNTHESIS: GLOBAL BENCHMARKING OF ENTREPRENEURIAL MODELS

# LITERATURE INSIGHTS: INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

- Circular Economy Theory – Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Bocken
- , 2013; Bocken et al., 2014)
- Eco-Entrepreneurship & Innovation – (Schaltegger, 2002; Hall et al., 2010; Cohen & Winn, 2007)
- Deathcare & Thanatology Studies – (Walter, 1996; Ariès, 1981; Becker, 1973)
- Climate Ethics & Sustainability Transitions – (IPCC, 2022; Raworth, 2017; Meadowcroft, 2009)

# CONSUMER CONTRIBUTION IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

A CIRCULAR ECONOMY IS AN ECONOMIC MODEL THAT MINIMIZES WASTE BY RECYCLING

- By choosing products that are durable and repairable, consumers can contribute to the circular economy

- Consumers can reduce waste and resource use by avoiding unnecessary items and choosing quality over quantity

# THE FUTURE OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The future of the circular economy offers a vision of a world where economic growth no longer depends on the exploitation of limited natural resources, but on innovation and the efficient use of materials

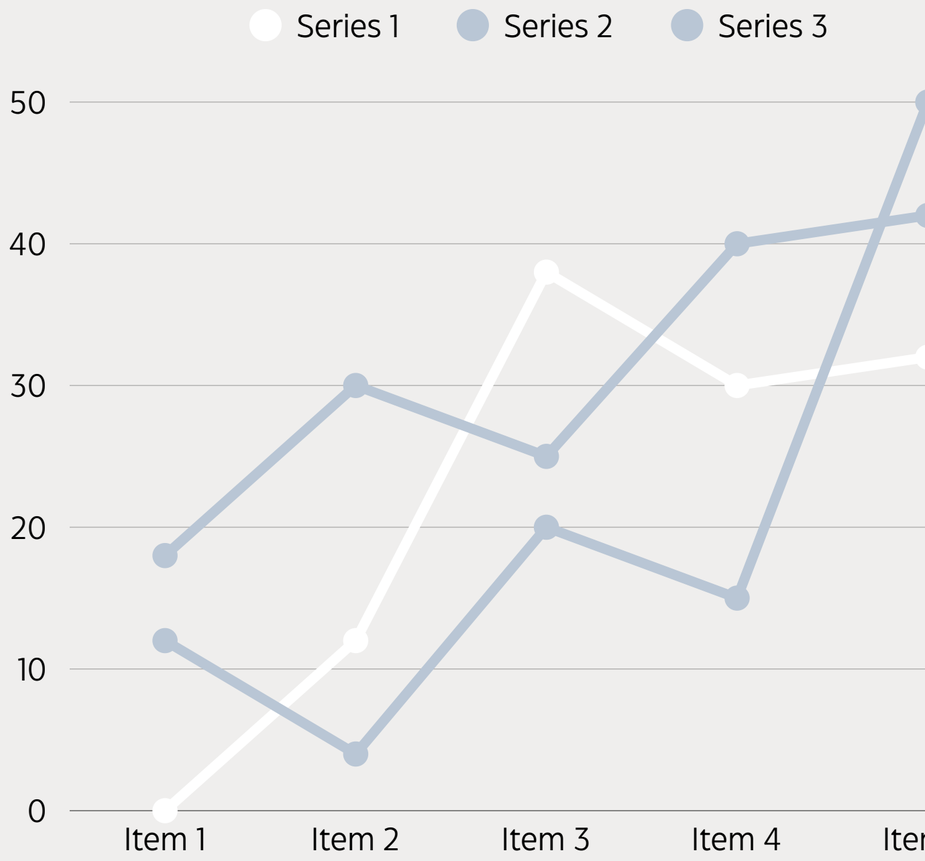
Close collaboration between various sectors will mark the future of a circular economy

Policies that encourage circular economy practices will be developed by the government

Consumers will become more aware of the importance of a circular economy

# IMPACT OF WASTE IN THE ENVIRONMENT

The fact that plastic waste does not easily decompose naturally makes it a significant contributor to environmental damage and can persist in nature for hundreds of years. Throwing plastic carelessly, especially in the sea, can result in pollution that is detrimental to marine ecosystems and threatens marine life. Plastic can be mistaken for food by marine animals, causing death by causing a blockage in the digestive tract. In addition, microplastics formed from plastic degradation can enter the food chain, which can pose a health risk to humans



# KEY FINDINGS

## INNOVATION PATTERNS IN CIRCULAR MEMORIAL ECONOMIES

Emerging Entrepreneurial Models:

- Biodegradable urns & tree burials (e.g., Capsula Mundi)
- Human composting technologies (e.g., Recompose in Seattle)
- Digital memorial platforms with ancestry linked forests
- Cemetery bio conversion zones and urban biodiversity planning
- Culturally sensitive rituals integrated with ecological goals

# CONCLUSION

## Toward Regenerative Memorial Economies

Main Takeaways:

- Deathcare is an untapped frontier for green entrepreneurship.
- Circular Memorial Economies offer a compelling alternative to resource-intensive practices.
- Cultural sensitivity and emotional resonance enhance adoption.
- Interdisciplinary innovation is key to transition.

# RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

FOR ENTREPRENEURS:

- INVEST IN INCLUSIVE, COMMUNITY-INFORMED MODELS
- LEVERAGE DIGITAL TOOLS TO SCALE GREEN DEATHCARE
- PARTNER WITH ECOLOGICAL NGOS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
-

FOR POLICYMAKERS:

- UPDATE REGULATIONS TO SUPPORT NATURAL BURIALS AND HUMAN COMPOSTING
- INCENTIVISE CIRCULAR INNOVATION IN MEMORIAL SERVICES
- INTEGRATE MEMORIAL DESIGN INTO URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
-

FOR RESEARCHERS:

- DEEPEN EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN DIVERSE CULTURAL CONTEXTS
- EXPLORE EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF CIRCULAR MEMORIALS

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# THANK YOU