



# IMPACT REPORT

## Summer 2022

The Natural Pod team believes we can create better learning environments for all ages, while being deeply committed to people and the planet. There is great work to be done to be responsible stewards of our environment throughout our business, leading to a positive impact on the students and educators we support. This impact report will share the goals we have set forth, and support us in measuring the impact of the work we do.

This is our starting point, not our stopping point.

## The industry we seek to change

At a time of dynamic shifts in learning environments, tight timelines, and limited budgets, educators are finding it ever more challenging to make decisions that best serve to support learning goals and health of students. Often the choice is expedience vs excellence, leading to unsatisfactory outcomes - in both education and sustainability.

Consumers' desire for “fast furniture” is contributing to landfill waste at an alarming rate; In 2018, generation of furniture and furnishings in Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) was 12.1 million tons, making up 4.1% of total MSW. This is nearly 10 million more tons per year since 1960, which was 2.2 million<sup>1</sup>.

Fast furniture, in residential and educational settings, is created to meet demand and generate quick revenues; materials are often constructed with a multitude of impractical, low quality materials (chipboard, bound with toxic glues) that cannot be refinished or repaired, and are discarded and replaced entirely, after short life spans. Low quality furniture is often created with poor supply chain practices, and toxic materials that can be harmful to the environment and people.

Combined, the low quality and value of fast furniture mean it's usually too expensive or difficult to repair, sell, or donate, and it's much more likely to end up on the curb than the more expensive, robust furniture of previous generations.

## Natural Pod Benefit Statement

Our mission at Natural Pod is to create practical, healthy, and sustainable learning environments, enabling all students and educators to reach their full potential. Using in-house design, build, and product sourcing, we create student-centered environments that enhance their well-being and education, within the constraints faced daily by educators, while making a positive impact on the planet.

Natural Pod is committed to providing non-toxic, and renewable or recycled, ethically sourced and manufactured educational furnishings and materials, that have multiple purposes throughout their life, and have a plan for where they will go after their current use.

Our solutions are built to last, and designed to meet the evolving needs and demands of students and educators. Thereby mitigating the need to be replaced, or to end up in landfills. Quality materials also lead to knowing where they came from, what they're made of, and the impact they

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<sup>1</sup> [In 2018, landfills received 27 million tons of plastic. This was 18.5 % of all municipal solid waste landfilled.](#) This equated to an 8.7 percent recycling rate in 2018. Additionally, [in 2018, landfills received 12.2 million tons of wood. This equaled 8.3 % of all MSW landfilled that year.](#)

have on the people they support. Our commitment to these materials has a positive impact up and down our and our partners' supply chains and on the environment and communities we serve.

## Measuring our impact

We're setting realistic goals for striving for a positive impact. These goals will challenge us internally, and model the way for those people and businesses around us.

- **GOAL: 100% ethically sourced / manufactured**
  - All Natural Pod product line is FSC certified manufacturing and product
  - All Natural Pod products are North American made
- **GOAL: Maintain less than 1% PVC in product line**
  - Our products contain less than 1% PVC (excl: electrical components) have no harmful off-gassing, and use soy glues.
- **GOAL: No single use materials in packaging**
  - Crates are made from plywood which is able to be used multiple times, in multiple ways.
  - Plastic wrap is used for packaging furniture product pieces together for product bundles. We strive to eliminate this single use material.
- **GOAL: Maintain B Impact Assessment certification for sustainable business practices**
  - We are currently in the B Impact Assessment review process, hoping to enhance our practices to ensure we adhere to their robust standards for excellence in sustainable business.

This is just a starting point. There is more work to be done in all aspects of how we work, to challenge ourselves to be better, and to set the stage for those around us to be better as well.