



PEOPLE & PLANET'S COOKBOOK FOR

YOUTH COLLECTIVE *action*





THANK YOU

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WHY THIS COOKBOOK MATTERS

Have you ever found yourself wanting to contribute to sustainable development, but not knowing how to act? Or do you feel that you already do what you can, but you find that without structural changes and support from local authorities and institutions, it is hard to achieve meaningful change?

The good news: it is possible to develop individual action into collective action to promote more meaningful change. Young people have already proven to be key agents for development in national and local contexts. There are several ways for these drivers of transformation to realise their full potential and contribute to transformative change.

WHAT'S IN THIS COOKBOOK?

This cookbook presents a series of recipes for youth-led collective change towards sustainability.

These came out of a discussion during the fifth edition of the European Youth Event 2023 in Strasbourg. 20 young European citizens took part in a brainstorming session, which was led by four young activists who are part of the People & Planet: a Common Destiny campaign.

These are the topics that we will approach:

- 1) Youth Councils
- 2) Marketing
- 3) Campaigns
- 4) Greenwashing



YOUTH COUNCILS

An individual can rarely create meaningful impact in fighting climate change; the challenge is in promoting targeted action amongst the masses. More people mobilising can lead to positive change.

Think big, but start small. For example, don't forget people in power. Picking up on the interests of decision-makers which are in line with your own priorities can be a great way to start collective change. Be an active citizen: try to charm local authorities into thinking about sustainability!

You can face several difficulties – a lack of interest by local authorities, or even issues in finding the right communication channels. However, with these tips, you too can influence “the machine” you thought was unreachable.

JOIN A LOCAL ORGANISATION

If you find that the authorities are not the most accessible institutions to work with, join a youth group or other local organisations. Your voice is amplified, and your ideas will gain more visibility and be more easily picked up by the established power.



JOIN LOCAL INITIATIVES PROMOTED BY YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

You may think that local assemblies are useless in terms of reaching your goals, especially those aimed at young people. However, these are important examples of participatory democracy, through which you can understand what kind of problems are affecting the local communities and learn how to act upon them.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR TOPIC AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

To be a good advocate, you should be aware of your local reality and acknowledge the existing territorial practices to promote sustainability. Knowledge creates further knowledge and inspires new solutions and innovative thinking.

SPREAD AWARENESS AND BE INFORMED

Youth councils do not have to target only political power. They are key in spreading awareness to the general population. Promoting collective behavioural change can have a great impact, and it can also help your council gather further support and influence.



MARKETING

Have you ever bought a snack after seeing a passerby enjoying it? Have you been inspired to buy the same clothes after seeing them on someone else? This influenced behaviour happens because people value the choices of those around them and are quick to learn from their peers.

So why not talk openly among friends and family about climate action? Sometimes people don't realise others share the same ideas as they do.

Team up with your friends and colleagues, and use social media to show the world that your collective small-scale actions can lead to larger changes – you never know who you will influence until you use your voice.



SAY THE RIGHT THING IN THE RIGHT WAY

The facts of the climate crisis can sometimes be confusing or too daunting, so verified and user-friendly information is a must. Talk to others to develop your ideas. Use accessible images and videos in social media to raise awareness. In schools, create interactive activities for young children to explain complex ideas in clearer ways.



BE FUN, BE LOUD, BE FRIENDLY, AND CHALLENGING

Being creative makes it easier to make a change. If you are talking about climate action, tell a story which is catchy and interactive. Adapt the threat of information which could be boring into valuable knowledge to be informative and inspire action which can be interesting, stimulating and pleasant to get involved in.

DO MORE IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES

Reach out to people in person on top of any social media activity. Get to know your audience, who will be young people just like you. Talk with your friends, go to schools, universities and youth groups, and spread the word.

GIVE PEOPLE HOPE

The climate crisis is the biggest challenge society is facing. Giving people hope, and the sense that by changing our practices collectively, we can improve things, is a huge step in carving out more sustainable practices.

CAMPAIGNS

The Fridays for Future global activist movement - an initiative started by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg - showed the world that not only are young people committed and engaged in protecting the planet and stopping climate change, but also, if everyone comes together with a common goal via an organised set of actions, they can make a difference.

There are also plenty of lesser-known examples of successful climate campaigns which raised awareness of local communities and promoted real change.

Voicing your opinion to the world can make you feel vulnerable; just remember it is also a way of getting one step closer to achieving collective impact.





KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Understanding your target audience and adapting your campaign to it is the best way to have impact and be clear to people about what you are saying.

FACTS DON'T LIE

The climate crisis is a fact, not an opinion. Science is on your side when urging the need for a change. Facts are the best friends of your campaign and should be communicated in original ways. If people are complaining or counter-arguing, share what scientists have to say with them.



PLAN THE STRATEGY

Planning makes all of the difference when it comes to securing a hit campaign rather than enduring a lot of work which no one will ever remember. Create polls and surveys to work with your audience in learning how to address the topics you collectively would like to prioritise. Develop some follow-up actions to guarantee that any hard-earned success can be impactful, even after the campaign is over.

A WEAPON AGAINST INACTION

Unfortunately, authorities are not always on the right side of history regarding the climate crisis. Campaigns can be a great way to organise the community and demand more sustainable measures. Activism and collective action will always have the upper hand over inaction and repression.

GREENWASHING

Climate action has an invaluable resource at hand: its countless studies which are a reliable way of promoting sustainable development and suggesting concrete actions to achieve it.

Not everyone is on the same page, though. Some companies are called out for “greenwashing”, employing actions or language around riding the “green” wave to sell people “solutions” that might do more harm than good. Therefore, it is more important than ever to reflect upon what is really sustainable in people’s habits and the products that they use.

Start by asking yourself: when was the last time you saw an advert that mentioned words such as: sustainable, organic, vegan, local product, etc. Can you really trust them, or are these just marketing campaigns?



INFORMATION IS KEY

In a capitalist market, information is knowledge. Learn about the products you normally use – the ingredients and materials used, and how they are produced. Do some research to identify the brands that have been naughty and how you can find (greener) alternatives.



FINE, I'LL DO IT MYSELF!

Cook more often with local ingredients, produce your own cleaning products, refill your containers, and buy second hand clothes. Leaving your comfort zone is a big step in the right direction.



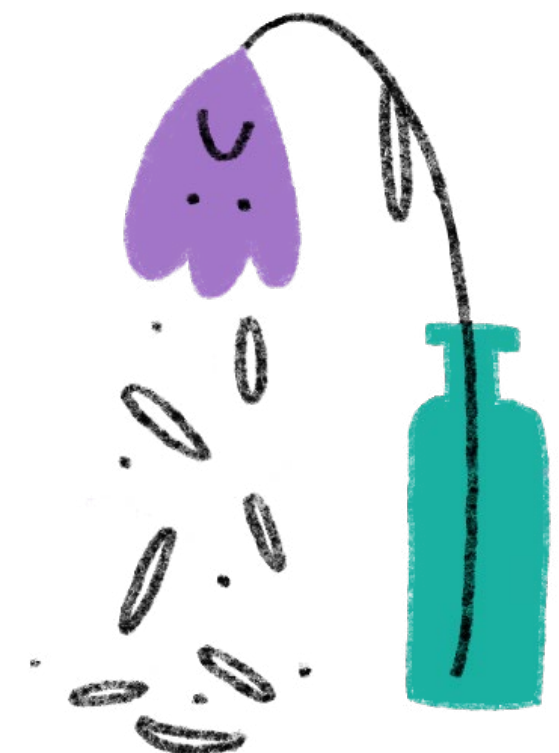
TRUST YOUR GUT

Most of the time, your values and ideas can guide your intuition of what is a good deal or not. Don't rely only on what companies tell you – and when they fail the sustainability test, call them out and boycott their business.



CALL THE MANAGER

There are several laws protecting consumers against greenwashing. When you see a company doing it, contact the relevant government department, or a regulatory or auditing body, or even tell your friends and family about it.







THE PEOPLE & PLANET PROJECT

People and Planet: A Common Destiny is a European project that aims to sensitise young European citizens to the challenges and consequences arising from climate change, thereby encouraging them to mobilise, and even take the lead in adopting more sustainable lifestyles. It also aims to improve practices of local authorities, allowing for the active engagement of youth in the policy-making process, and aiming at the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

People & Planet is a project co-funded by the European Commission through the DEAR (Development Education and Awareness Raising) Programme. It involves 17 organisations - local authorities and civil society organisations - from 8 EU member states (Germany, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain) and Cape Verde, that want to help to take better care of our planet.



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