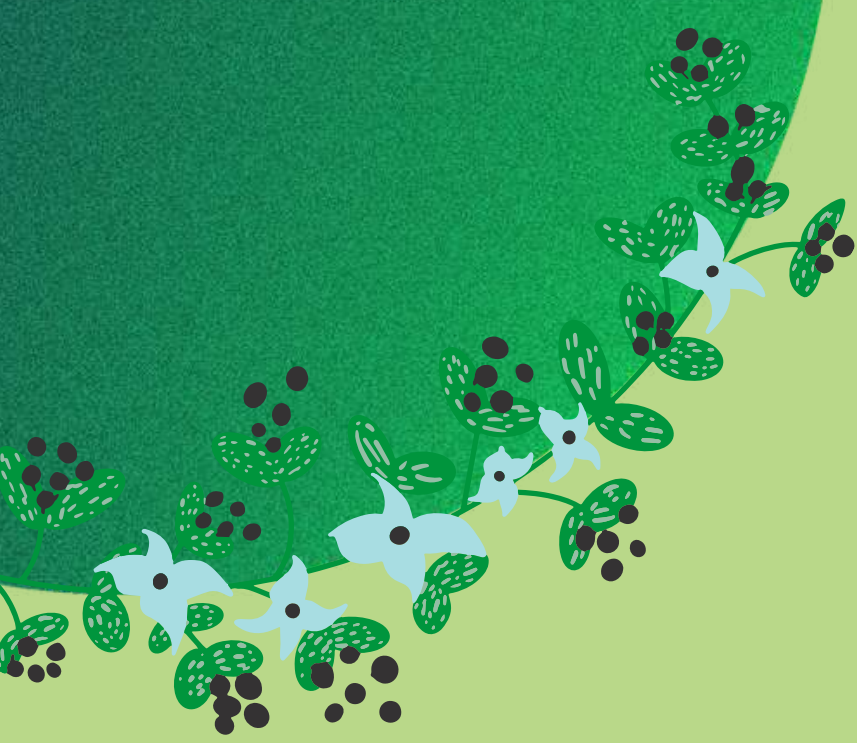




# Green your youth project!

A handbook



# ECOrasmus: Green your youth project! A handbook

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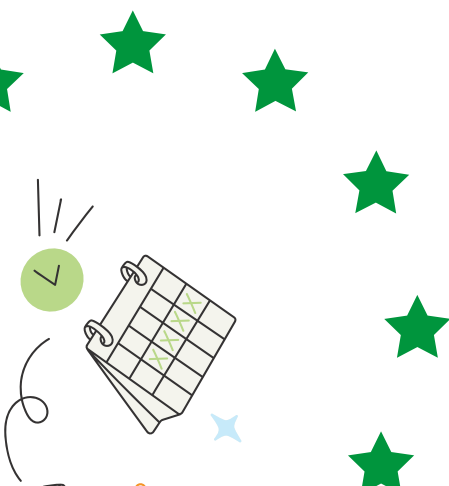
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# INTRODUCTION

This handbook was designed as practical tool to make European educational youth work more sustainable and greener.

This book is not an academic exercise. We will not exhaust the definition of eco-friendliness, sustainability or green practices. Instead, the handbook shares practical findings and results from extensive research of practices through interviews, readings, talks and observations.

In general, this writing has one aim: to inspire, empower and enable the reader to apply eco-friendly practices and make their youth activities future-proof.

The team behind the book sees the role of the handbook in firmly putting the topic of sustainable youth work on the agenda, building a network of individuals and organisations, by continuously sharing knowledge, skills and attitudes about eco-friendly practices, by learning from each other and by celebrating results. We are sure this is the only way to go.

If the reader gets one smile, finds one insight or one practical useful tool in this handbook, our mission is already a success! And if you have any comment, improvement, fascinating idea or best eco-practice, join us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and share!

Together we made this book, together we will get this done. Good luck!

## How is the handbook structured?

Depending on your need you can scroll to, or click on the topic of your interest.

The handbook's structure has many similarities with a classical journey. Where does the journey go? Towards future-proof, eco-friendly youth work, where sustainable practice is the standard in the Erasmus+ framework and beyond.

### But how to get there, and what do we need for that journey?

We start with project planning and design in Chapter 1 **"PROJECT PLANNING"**, where all journeys start and take form.

Then Chapter 2 **"TRAVEL"** leads us to travelling the sustainable ways. Chapter 3 **"VENUE"** is about the importance of an eco-friendly venue for the youth encounter and principles for making the right choice.

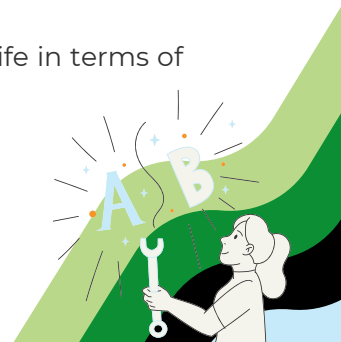
Chapter 4 **"FOOD"** is closely related to the venue choices and all about food and drinks, from local, seasonal, organic production to cutlery and bringing your lunchbox or great vegan recipes.

The journey continues in Chapter 5 **"MATERIALS"** dedicated to all kinds of workshop materials that one might need for an educational youth activity.

Chapter 6 **"COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS"** is about communicating your eco-friendly practices, policies, activities and aims and addresses aspects of collaboration with project partners.

Finally, Chapter 7 **"THE OFFICE"** shall help to rethink our workplaces and office-life in terms of sustainable infrastructure, space and daily habits in the office.

**We wish you good luck, enjoy the read, and above all the ride!**





## Where was ECRasmus born?

Born out of a 2019 network activity in Yanoshi, Ukraine, enthusiastic changemakers from different countries, backgrounds and organisations decided to put their dreams, thoughts, and words into action. Yes, Erasmus+ is a good idea, it connects Europe and beyond, builds peace and makes us grow as professionals and humans. But a common point of pain was shared: many Erasmus+ projects were definitely not ecologically sustainable, not eco-friendly, or green enough. Thus, the idea of ECRasmus was born to help make Erasmus+ programmes and any other residential youth encounter sustainable for the future. May this passion, that unites us, cause a true butterfly-effect of eco-friendly practices in European youth work!

## The ECRasmus project

### The project consists of three parts:

- a research phase generating input for this handbook in the form of applicable eco-practices for multiple aspects of educational youth work
- a training course allowing us to share our lessons learnt, exposing them to practitioners' peer-to-peer review and creating our first spark of international networking with youth workers committed to sustainable youth work
- going public with the research results, the eco-tips and practices that we collected in this handbook and further insights on our [webpage](#).

The research (July-December 2022) was conducted in cooperation with stakeholders, by performing a survey amongst and interviews with youth workers, project managers, trainers and facilitators, NGO workers, and representatives of National Agencies. For the survey, 119 people from 29 countries responded. Besides that, 39 interviews were done with interviewees from 20 countries. Find the report [here](#). We are grateful for the generous input but also for the words of enthusiasm and encouragement!

The Training Course was held in March 2023 in Vilanova I la Geltrú (Barcelona), Spain. It allowed for learning and experiencing eco-practices and methods with 25 participants from France, Germany, Hungary, Spain and The Netherlands. You can find the report [here](#). During the training course we also collected feedback, ideas and inspiration for this handbook. From this beautiful group of active talented people already new projects arose.

In the third phase, we publish this handbook, started our [social media campaigning](#) and launch our web page (coming soon). We also ask your assistance and support if you like the product. Supporting us is easy, simply join our mission by using the practices we recommend, improving them, and sharing your know-how and practices with us and others. With your engagement greening Erasmus+ mobilities and – in general - European youth work will be great, fruitful and unstoppable!

### The need for the handbook in the Erasmus+ context

Are you wondering how climate change is connected to Erasmus+? Let's have a look.

The Erasmus + Programme started as a student mobility programme in 1987, and by 2020 has involved 11 million participants, contributing to a more integrated and inclusive Europe. It has also contributed to more air traffic and had other negative sustainability impacts.

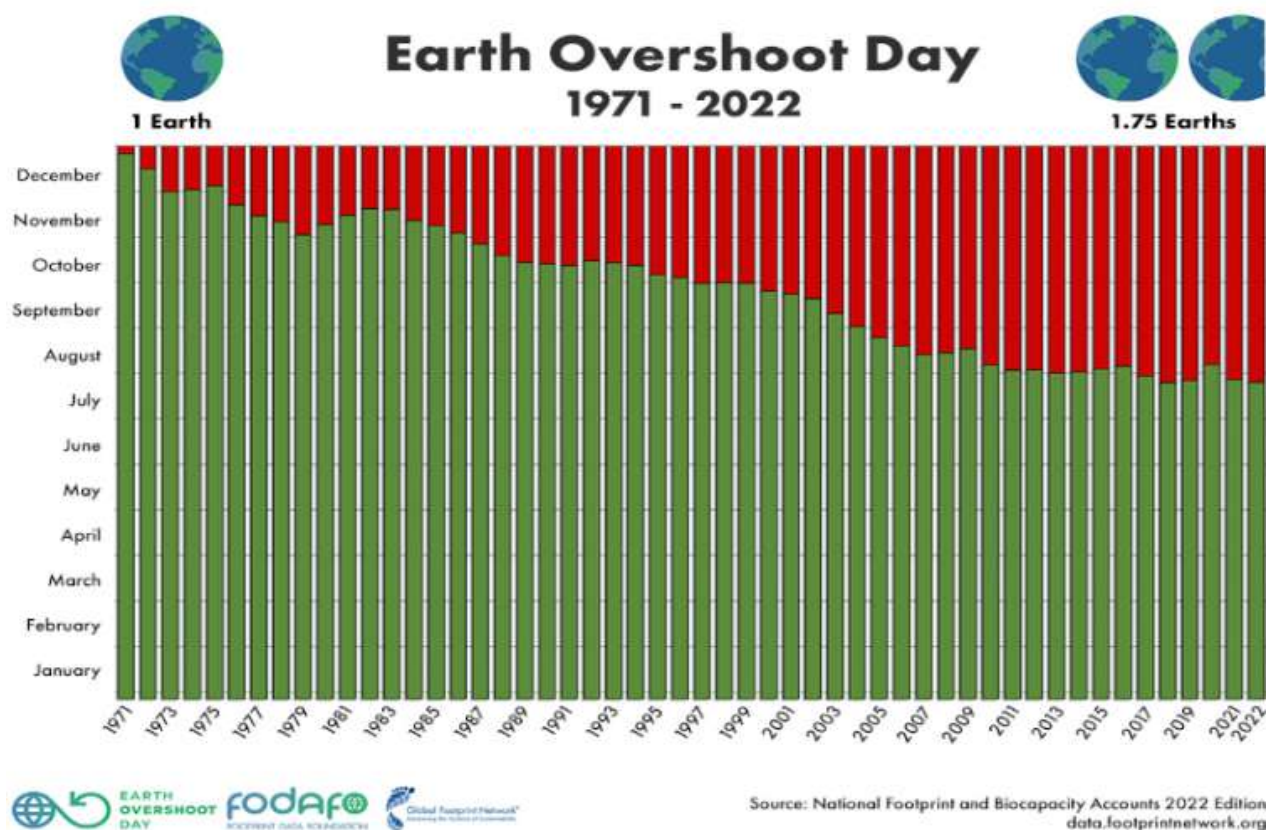


In 2017 alone, students' exchanges produced 160.000 ton of CO2 due to a large number of mobilities, which is equivalent to 31.567 passenger vehicles driven for one year (check [here](#) by taking the quiz).

Our own research shows us that youth stakeholders find international educational youth work very important, but it also shows that there is a lack of money, knowledge, expertise, leadership, and appreciation for the element of sustainability and eco-friendliness. More or less all respondents were convinced that we can do (much) better. The handbook is our contribution to making youth work more future proof.

### The environmental challenge

Continuing to (ab)use our Earth the way we do, we would need 1,7 Earths. Countries in the 'modern' west do by far worse. Yes, Europe generally looks bad; find out about your own country's footprint here. We basically use up resources from the generations after us.

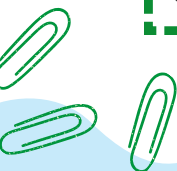


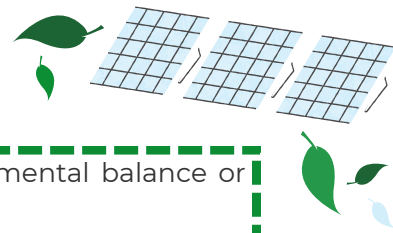
Source: [Global Footprint Network](#)

We have to change the way we consume, produce, organise; there is no alternative to this truth. For youth projects this means, we need to change what we plan, manage and implement, as well as to decide what not to do anymore.

#### When planning a new project, we shall ask ourselves a few simple questions:

- *Heal or steal?* Does my youth action heal the future or steal from it? What is its contribution to the future?
- *Enhance or diminish?* Does my activity enhance human well-being or diminish it?





- *Restore or deplete?* Does my event restore mental, social and environmental balance or deplete resources for either?
- *Increase or decrease?* Does my project increase human effects on climate change or decrease or mitigate them?
- *Needs or wants?* Does my youth activity serve human needs or manufacture human wants?

## Finally: use of terms, concepts, language

Throughout the handbook we use the terms 'sustainable' and 'eco-friendly' interchangeably. Our goal was to write a readable and practical book. We did not aim for an academic publication, but language is important. Having clear definitions of concepts in mind is very helpful, and you can find some of those definitions here.

As you have seen, the idea for ECOrasmus was born within the Erasmus+ framework, especially against the background of its transnational youth mobilities. However, when we explored further, we figured that also educational youth activities outside of Erasmus+ youth mobilities often face issues with their environmental impact. Thus, we wrote the handbook with both in mind. For the reader it is important to consider that we use youth mobilities and educational youth activities interchangeably. Using these terms we think of youth exchanges, training courses, seminars, youth forums, conventions, workshops and many more. Shortly, it is about any residential educational activities in the youth sectors involving both young people, youth workers or any other youth stakeholders locally, nationally or internationally.

### Examples from commercial parties

In the handbook, we also mention private companies with examples of eco-friendly solutions, but definitely not to make (hidden) advertisements for these companies or products. Our aim is to help with a thinking process. To enrich the assessment of available alternatives. The reader's critical view and careful deliberation on which products, suppliers and partners to work with, remains by far the most important.

### English Only?

Some of the links refer to non-English websites. When no English version is available, sometimes online-translation tools can help. Anyway, good eco-practice speaks many languages! The local language is an important source of much knowledge and solutions.

“Do you think Erasmus+ activities should be a synonym for eco-friendly activities? Definitely. Because we cannot afford otherwise. As we know, there is no planet B.”

Sabina Enéa Téari, Foresta Collective, Germany

Thanks for joining us! Let's learn, connect and grow together for the better!

The Team

For more ideas and interactive tools  
visit our webpage: [ecorasmus.eu](http://ecorasmus.eu)









# What is sustainable project planning?







Eco-friendly project planning is about decisions and actions that prioritise sustainability throughout the conceptualising, ideation, proposal development, planning, monitoring, and evaluation of a project. Planning is a key component of successful eco-friendly youth education projects.

Aligning those involved in the project is decisive; having the right partners and developing a clear and SMART project is necessary. Making decisions that facilitate future actions is the essence of planning. The eco-friendly way is when sustainability is held into account and prioritised. This includes: the choice of project type and topics, partners, countries, events, participants, trainers, materials, IT tools, spaces, travel, accommodation, food & drinks, as well as energy used, activities done. Moreover, awareness and concept development precede planning, as it requires time and attention to change approaches.

That's why planning and preparation are crucial in this handbook. Finally, evaluation is important in helping us learn and improve for future activities. Adopting eco-friendly planning habits can make a huge contribution to reducing the environmental impact of projects.

## Interventions for decision-making

Table 2 OVERVIEW OF INTERVENTIONS FOR ROUTINE AND COMPLEX DECISIONS

	Intervention	What it is	Example	Why it works
For routine decisions	 commitment	Publicly commit (or lock yourself in) to performing a sustainable behaviour in the future	"Idle-free" campaigns across Canada: private, commercial, and municipal drivers publicly pledge to turn off engines	Public commitment enhances positive feedback for sustainable behaviour – and provides for negative feedback if you don't deliver
	 defaults	Make a sustainable behaviour the default (more obvious or easy) choice	Energy efficiency initiatives in which participants must opt out are more effective	Defaults and opt-out programs build on the power of the status quo and our aversion to losses
	 feedback	Provide verbal, written or digital feedback (preferably in real time) on behaviour outcomes	In-home digital displays provide real-time feedback on electricity use; can be appliance specific	Makes long-term costs tangible and relevant "now"; enhances "good feelings" of meeting sustainability goals
	 goal-setting	Set an expected level of performance or compliance for a sustainable behaviour	Office-based efficiency and waste reduction efforts begin with a goal or target for these efforts	Enhances the meaning of feedback by providing a benchmark against which to judge progress
For complex decisions	 structured decision-making (sdm)	Diagnose the problem with stakeholder input; break decision into manageable steps; decision is based on alternative which performs best against decision criteria; broad input is solicited at all stages and process is typically guided by a facilitator	A utility company utilizes SDM to find constructive and sustainable solutions to competing river use demands	Decisions are seen as an opportunity to clearly identify objectives, include diverse perspectives and deal with tough trade-offs; avoids solutions that are attractive only because they are obvious or easy, or because it's the "way it has always been done"
	 multi-criteria decision analysis (mcda)	Set decision criteria, weight criteria and enter criteria into a computer program which calculates an overall score for each alternative	A municipal authority uses input from MCDA to decide among various solid waste management options – including the siting of new facilities	Reduces complex, diverse info about options to a single score; decision options are ranked according to those scores and the decision-maker can choose the option with the highest score

Source 'Making Sustainable Choices: A Guide for Managers



“Eco-friendly practices are not the rule yet. When conducting the interviews, I found that in the process of making projects, only half of the interviews took eco-friendly practices into account.”

Pedro Miguelez Casas, researcher and youth worker



## Why is it relevant?



Planning is key. Maybe this chapter is the most important chapter of this handbook. Planning means using time well; by making choices now, you can influence choices of the future. Sustainable decision making on a management level shows us that we often cannot oversee the consequences of our actions or imagine the result after making a change.

Finding the right partners for your initiative, and communicating the available knowledge, skills and network is really the first step. Co-designing the project the logical next one. What is your notion of eco-friendly and sustainable accommodation, food or transportation? When is using big pieces of paper a must, and when a waste? This can differ per person per situation and per organisation. Finding out any differences between your organisations and your team members is important.

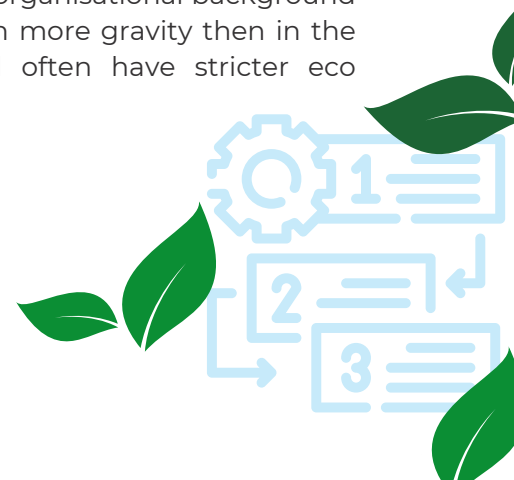
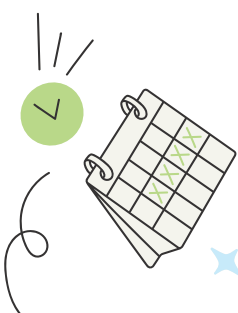
Also, on the practical, everyday level, looking for affordable tickets in public transportation in an early phase, will likely raise the chance you will travel greener instead of taking that polluting flight. Writing a project with a certain eco-friendly ideal is one thing. Congratulations if your project is granted! But will it work? A good plan deserves the best possible planning and execution.



## What are the good practices?



- **Managing expectations:** people and expectations can be very diverse. Explore differences in the planning phase to avoid unnecessary frustration later on. Agree on why and what for you do the project, and what all team members and partners expect to happen and achieve.
- **Celebrating little successes:** it is important not to end up embittered. Seeing the topic as too hard or too big can result in disengagement or avoidance. Make sure you handle frustrations positively and celebrate your achievements.
- **Awareness of different viewpoints:** what is attainable, and seen as sustainable, differs from person to person, and might be tainted by the individual's organisational background and origin. Water waste e.g., in Spain is generally regarded with more gravity than in the Netherlands. And organisations with an environmental goal often have stricter eco standards than an organisation that focuses on other topics.

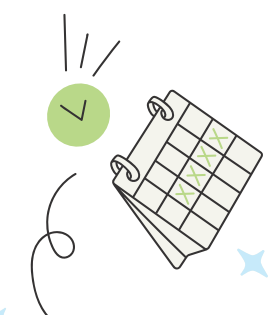




- **Focus on the planning phase:** prioritise planning and dedicated a lot of time to it. For making your project and organisation eco-friendly you can learn from NGOs, governmental organisations, individual professionals or businesses. Where to start? By assessing how you are doing and then developing a strategy based on your findings. You should also adopt a sustainability standard like the [P5 Standard for Sustainability in Project Management](#).
- **Be aware of the importance of choice of partners:** choose partners that broadly share your values on sustainability and that agree to organise the project in an eco-friendly way. Partner choice also effects potential travel distances. Consider a partnerships formula, with, for example, 75% of the partners on a distance of 0-999 km which allows for train or bus travel, 20 % on a distance of 1000-1500 km and 5% on a distance of 1500 km or further. Of course, there can be exceptions for good reasons, but this could help as a rule of thumb.
- **Consider which digital tools you want to use:** there are alternative tools, for example: [Big Blue Button](#) as an open-source tool instead of ZOOM.
- **Plan more time and budget for travel:** offer more time for booking. Structurally allocate more money for green travel.
- **Involve local actors in your project:** create a connection to the place and the people where you are implementing the project.
- **Regulate travel:** regulate with all people working in the project how they are going to travel during the project. Be clear if and to which extent travelling time is also counted as working time.
- **Communicate eco-practices right away:** inform participants about eco-friendly practices beforehand (e.g., you expect them to travel green, you offer a meat-free diet, etc).
- **Incorporate environmental education and sustainability activities into the project activities:** raise awareness about environmental issues and inspire participants to take action.
- **Create a sustainability checklist for your projects:** list all sustainability measures of your project, and check regularly if you keep implementing them.
- **Also keep in mind inner sustainability:** allow time for regeneration and real encounters, don't make the schedule too full.

“ It is important to state our values to our partners before starting a project. To state that it is important for us to focus on sustainability, also on the impact of our project on the climate. ”

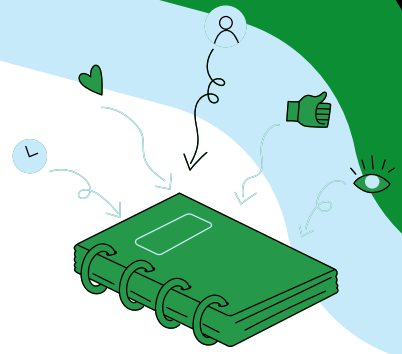
Helena Tovarková, director of Eco-NGO Nadace Veronica



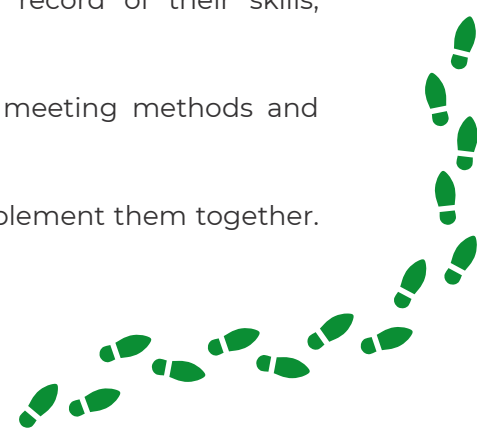


# What do we need to do?

## 1 First steps



- **Create a basic green project policy:** Set-up a working document detailing your measures for planning green projects and update it regularly.
- **Be clear about which types of projects you do or don't do:** start a list of project types your organisation takes part in (and which not).
- **Travel policy:** decide where/where not to, and how to travel. Make a draft. For more see chapter 2: Travel.
- **Principles of food and lodging:** formulate principles guiding your choices for event venues and food. For more see chapter 3: Venue & chapter 4: Food).
- **Make eco-friendly your default:** put the eco-friendly options as 'default'. For example: 'vegetarian/vegan', 'green travel', and 'no extra luggage'.
- **Communicate your plan on sustainability:** at project planning stage, create and present a plan on sustainability and ask for feedback from your partners. Use this as your opportunity to agree on the projects sustainably measures.
- **Guideline on which partnerships to choose:** draft a guideline or sketch a profile of (future) partnerships to look for, and why.
- **Start with a common do and don'ts list:** have lists of dos and don'ts. Cultivate them and be prepared to explain the 'why'.
- **Assess your capacities as an organisation:** find out what information, know-how, skills, and interests are lacking in your organisation.
- **Stay up to date, follow trends:** stay curious, keep on learning from other NGOs, businesses, and other organisations.
- **Make your sustainability transformation a long-term project.** Make it learning. Make it fun. Learn, and raise awareness that doing things differently and the eco-friendly way is a process, an investment, it can take time to achieve results.
- **Celebrate little improvements:** track your measures and evaluate what is successful. Be proud and celebrate your achievements. Communicate small improvements too!
- **Build your network of eco-friendly trainers/facilitators:** keep record of their skills, attitudes and superpowers.
- **Inventorize green educational methods:** list training methods, meeting methods and exercises you already have developed. Assess them.
- **Set goals together as an organisation:** set goals together and implement them together. Present both failures and successes from time to time.



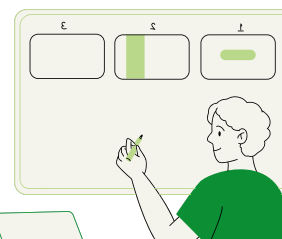


## 2 *Carry on*

- **Create a local impact:** be a good tourist and leave no trace. Or make sure to leave a positive trace: a clean-up, a reach out, a planting project. Connect with, co-create, co-produce and consume from and with locals.
- **Make a pledge and go public:** say what you do and invite others to join e.g., no more bottled water, drink Fairtrade coffee, lowering office temperatures. Green travel? Green lodging? Formalise the decision and publish it for a bigger chance of success. Commit to the cause.
- **Measure, monitor and show your environmental impact:** keep a track record of your activities in terms of travel, food and drinks, activities, materials, office costs and monitor their environmental impact (e.g. with a footprint tool). Make the outcomes of your measurements transparent and visible for a greater group of people.
- **Say goodbye to those that do not match your green standards:** be prepared to say goodbye to old partners and suppliers who are not willing to adhere to your green needs.
- **Set new sustainable goals year by year:** set goals, work towards them and reward good behaviour. Do this together with your team and partners.
- **Involve stakeholders in your eco-friendly journey:** involve your donors, local and international partners, your wider network and your participants actively in your sustainability journey.
- **Develop a tailor-made planning-tool for your projects:** last-minute solutions tend to be the most polluting ones. So think ahead, and develop a planning tool that caters your needs and helps you to improve your project planning practices in the long-term.
- **Invite interesting speakers to your events:** organise lectures & workshops periodically in your office and beyond on topics around sustainability.

## 3 *The last mile*

- **Create a culture of sustainability:** make eco-friendliness a part of the task-description of everybody involved. Create Key Performance Indicators for your project's performance on sustainability. This could be the amount of paper used, kilometres travelled by all participants, or total carbon emission of the project.
- **Cherish your planners and your project-writers:** they are the key for result.
- **Map your whole supply-chain:** find the most eco-friendly/sustainable suppliers, and use them. If possible, influence them on your green needs to grow stronger together.
- **Pilot green perfection:** go for a show-case project showing both content and sustainability equally covered to full satisfaction. Enjoy learning and be proud!



- **Mentoring others:** develop your role influencing other organisations and professionals.
- **Disseminate like a shooting star:** find easy and effective ways to help make many others changemakers in greening up educational youth activities and beyond. Be prepared to receive ideas for improvement too.

### Food for thought

- What is your key takeaway from this chapter?
- When assessing your planning practices, what is already done well and what needs improvement?
- What will you do differently when planning your next educational youth activity?

### Practical tools

- [Step-by-step guide for creating a sustainable NGO by Causeland](#)
- [On Non-Profit Strategic planning by Bloomerang](#)
- [Sustainable Events Checklist by JINT](#)
- [Overview of project management tools from Geekflare](#)

### Further reading

- [Article on sustainable project management](#)
- [Ten things to consider when planning programmes with young people](#)
- Find the most accessible places by train [here](#) and [here](#)
- [Cities with best Public Transport](#)
- [Cities best for biking](#)
- [Checklist for sustainable youth exchanges](#)







## What is sustainable travel?

Mobility often is a central element in international youth work, especially in Erasmus+ youth projects. To bring together young people from different parts of Europe (or the world) creates the magic of intercultural encounters and learning experiences.

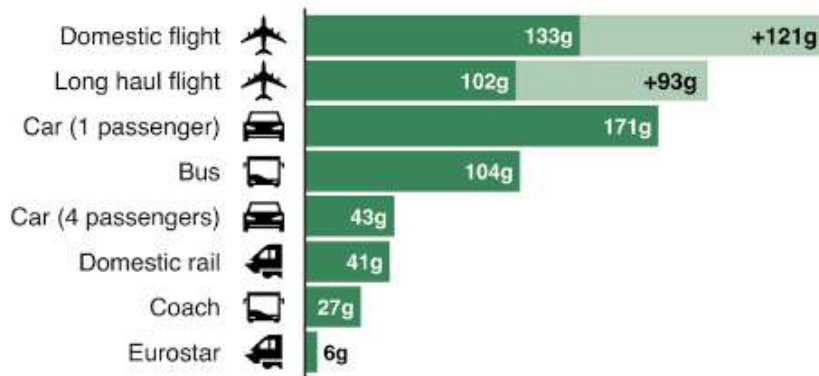
Can you imagine doing so without using a plane? Green travel practices are equivalent to searching for alternatives, from the strategic choice of your venue location to the means of transportation to get there: trains, buses, car-sharing, boats, bicycles, walking ...

Not always easy? That's true. A good organisation is key, and can reward you with new learning experiences and give mobility a whole new role within your projects: connecting people while being respectful with the environment!

### Emissions from different modes of transport

Emissions per passenger per km travelled

■ CO2 emissions ■ Secondary effects from high altitude, non-CO2 emissions



Note: Car refers to average diesel car

Source: BEIS/Defra Greenhouse Gas Conversion Factors 2019

BBC

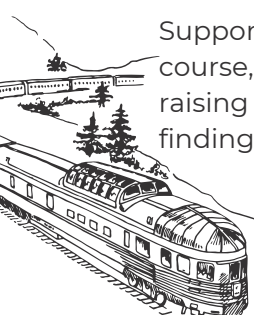
Source: <https://www.greenerasmus.org/#quiz>

## Why is it relevant?

In our survey, green travel was often mentioned as the most difficult-to-implement practice. The reasons are obvious: Flights are often incredibly cheap compared to train tickets, and it's easier, faster and more comfortable. What's more, in some regions it's really difficult to find alternatives, due to a lack of a good public transportation network. It seems like there are plenty of reasons to just hop on a plane.

Planes, however, are the most climate-harming means of transportation. In 2018, the contribution of air traffic to the annual human-caused greenhouse gas emissions reached about 6%. In European countries, home to many frequent flyers, the share is even bigger. In comparison, a train ride can produce as much as 70 times less emissions than a flight (Source: Stay grounded).

Supporting green travel is a great way to contribute to the sustainability of your activity. Of course, this is not about shaming or blaming people who end up taking a plane. However, raising the topic, gathering information and discussing it with your participants is key to finding sustainable alternatives, and also a chance to set positive examples.





## What are the good practices?

- **Slow travel together:** long bus or train rides can appear challenging at first sight. On the other hand: slow travel gives time to step out of the daily rush, observe the changing landscape, reflect, listen to a podcast or music, read a good book or preparing for the learning encounter ahead. Why not travel together and have a nice conversation? Make traveling a collective experience and turn the journey into a shared adventure! Participants from the same country or region could hop on the same bus or train, or organize a car-sharing (or a hike, or a bicycle tour, or ...). The bonus: travel time can be used to get to know each other, and participants can report about their travels on social media. Perhaps they could even do fun tasks together. Once at the venue, you already have a topic to talk about!

*In the last Youth Exchange, we achieved that 26 out of 30 people came by green travel. The activity took place in the most Southern part of Europe - next time I would make sure to choose a more accessible place. But most people from Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany and even Croatia came either as a group by car-sharing or they travelled by public transport. One person even came hitchhiking. They were enjoying this experience a lot!*

Simone Cesaro, "Yes to Sustainability"

- **Regional partnerships:** do we always have to travel far? Taking distance into account when planning a new project can help to avoid long travel for participants in the first place. Why not make a regional project and explore diversity in your surroundings? Collaborations with nearby partner countries improve the chances that participants will choose green means of travel to reach the activity venue. And for sure you will discover many exciting new things there, too!
- **Green travel policy:** a travel policy that sets standards for green travelling is a great way to reduce your travel emissions on the organisational level. One example from the Austrian NGO Südwind:
  - **For distances up to 600 km:** travelling has to be done by using grounded transportation (such as bus, ships, shared taxis, shuttles or similar).
  - **Between 600-1200 km:** you can choose between grounded travel and air travel; grounded travel is preferable.
  - **From 1200 km onwards:** air travel is the preferred choice.

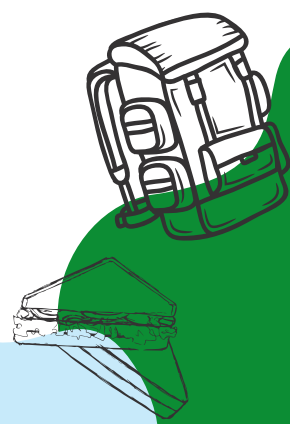
The policy also accounts travel time as working time.



# What do we need to do?

## 1 First steps

- **Carefully consider the need for travel:** is it really necessary to travel? Especially for short project meetings, it is often not necessary to meet in person and you can rather have your meeting online.
- **Raise awareness about the carbon footprint of travelling:** for example, by letting participants calculate their emissions with a [carbon footprint calculator](#).
- **Promote green travel option:** the “green travel” option in the Erasmus+ programme includes more funding and more travel days available for those who opt for low-emission means of transport. Be sure to include it in your application and motivate participants to take this option, for example by highlighting it in your Call for Participants and Infopack. Interrail tickets might be a feasible choice for those who travel green from other European countries.
- **Recognition for green travellers:** acknowledge people who made the effort to travel long distances with the least possible CO<sub>2</sub> emissions! For example: a little prize or a [certification](#) for the “Greenest traveller”.
- **Offsetting for flights:** whenever there is no alternative to taking a flight, consider offsetting the emissions. This can be done through local environmental projects or professional offsetting organisations such as [atmosfair](#). You could also think of your own offsetting action during your activity, e.g., planting trees.
- **Pack light:** the heavier your luggage, the more emissions are created by transporting it. Encourage participants to travel as light as possible.
- **Promote eco-friendly behaviour during the trip:** remind participants to bring their own refillable water bottle and/or coffee cup and to pack their sandwiches in an eco-friendly way.
- **Local green mobility:** once at the location, opt for public transportation, bicycles or walking. Whenever this is not possible, think about how you can organise group travel, for example with a shuttle bus.



## 2 Carry on



- **Strategic planning:** think at an early stage who you want to involve in your activity and where you are going to hold the event, taking into account travel distances to the event location. Is the venue located at a central place that can be easily reached by the participants? Can you collaborate with regional partners that are close by? If you seek collaborations with countries further away: How can they reach the venue?
- **Make travel a part of your programme:** let your educational youth activity start with the travel, not only upon arrival. Motivate participants to form groups to travel together, for example by night trains. This can be a great bonding experience. It needs some preparation, organisation and guidance, so make sure to calculate enough time for this, at least two months in advance of your residential activity.
- **Organise a preparatory online event to plan the travel:** to facilitate green travel, an online meeting with participants can be a great tool. This can be used for a first getting-to-know, to raise the awareness and motivation for green travel, as well as share tips and resources. This is also the moment where participants can form travel groups and make a travel plan together.

### My tips and tricks for train travels:

- *Plan enough time for changing trains! 20-40 minutes is good, as many trains have small delays.*
- *Check updates on trains a day in advance and the morning of departure. Interruptions are a common occurrence with trains: you are likely to get 1 hour of delay for every 4 hours of train travel.*
- *Bring a phone with mobile internet and power bank with you. It really helps to plan alternative routes when necessary.*
- *Try Interrail! It's a cheap and cool way of travelling by train in Europe!*

Peter Akkerman, "Bos dat van Zichzelf is"

- **Support the wellbeing of participants:** travelling for many hours does not only require valuable time and commitment of the participants, but can also affect their wellbeing and level of energy. Take into account that they might need a day of rest before they can fully take part in your programme. You could also decide to make green travel more attractive by providing a budget for proper rest and food during the trip. Being able to book an accommodation and have at least a couple of decent meals on the way will support the sense of wellbeing during travel and upon arrival.
- **Consider hybrid educational formats:** consider different activity formats that can reduce travel emissions, such as hybrid events. Perhaps participants can meet in local or regional groups and then connect with each other virtually.



## 3 The last mile

- **Set up your own green travel policy:** Stay Grounded has developed a [step-by-step guide](#) for developing your own travel policy.
- **Exploring new and innovative formats of green mobility:** what about a project that explores green mobility to the fullest? A bike trip through Europe, a night train challenge ... What ideas do you have to explore and promote sustainable forms of travelling?
- **Lobby for green travel:** bring the change to a bigger level. Spread the word about alternative ways of travelling among your colleagues, partners and networks. Exchange experiences with others about green travel endeavours! Lobby for more funding for green travel.
- **Advocate for a better transportation network across Europe:** if we want more green travel, there should also be a good railway infrastructure across Europe that allows time-efficient and affordable travelling. One example for campaigning is the European Network "[Back on Track](#)" that promotes cross-border night trains.

### Food for thought

- What is your key takeaway from this chapter?
- When assessing your travel practices: what is already done well and what needs improvement?
- What will you do differently in the travel arrangements for your next educational youth activity?

### Further reading

- Information and graphics on the impact of flying: [Stay Grounded](#)
- [Guide to a climate friendly travel policy](#)
- Article "[How Far Can We Get Without Flying](#)"
- [European Mobility Atlas](#)

### Practical tools

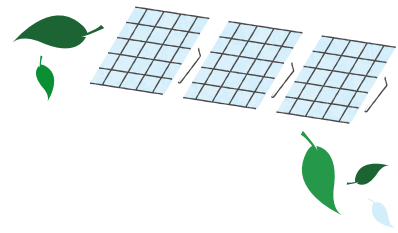
- [EcoPassenger](#): calculator to compare the environmental impacts of trains, cars and planes

### Where to find green travel options

- [Interrail Trip Planner](#)
- Operators that combine train and bus connections across Europe (not all train/bus operators are included) [The Trainline](#), [Rome2Rio](#)
- International bus companies: amongst others Flixbus, Eurolines
- Carpooling: [Bla Bla Car](#)
- A lot of information about buying train tickets: [Seat61](#)







## What is a sustainable venue?

Whether your activity takes place in a city, in a village or in the woods: an inviting space that caters for the needs of your group is important. This helps to turn the activity into a successful learning experience.

With a thoughtful choice of the venue, you can make a big difference in terms of sustainability. Relevant aspects are: the accessibility of the place, the use of renewable energy, water-saving measures, responsible waste management, fair treatment of workers, plant-based food servings, involvement in local community programmes, natural spaces and sustainable building techniques.

Do you have trouble finding such a “green venue”? It can be helpful to raise sustainability topics with your potential venue host, by explaining to them why these topics matter to you and perhaps suggesting alternatives to their usual offer. This way you invite them to go on a learning journey together.



Source: “Green Toolbox” by International Naturefriends (designed by Marika Latsone)

## Why is it relevant?

The transition from fossil fuels – by far the largest contributor to global climate change – to renewable energy resources (e.g. solar panels, windmills or biomass) is crucial in the fight against the climate crisis. Also, water-saving measures like collecting rainwater for toilet flushes and water-saving devices are gaining importance with periods of droughts being a growing concern in Europe. Staying at small-scale, family-run, local and traditional housing, preferably with renewable energy sources in place, reduces the ecological footprint of the accommodation by as much as 48% in comparison to large hotel complexes.

A holistic approach of sustainability goes beyond the ecological footprint. How are the workers treated? Who is managing the place and who will consequently benefit from your stay? Does the venue cooperate with the local community, e.g., buying food from local farmers? Is it possible to experience nature in and around the location?

Holding your activity at a venue that applies and showcases sustainable practices can set inspiring examples and could be a habit-changing opportunity for participants.





## What are the good practices?



- **Collaborate with an ecovillage:** ecovillages are communities that are designed with a holistic vision of sustainability to generate their social and natural environments. They can be a great learning space where participants can experience a truly sustainable lifestyle. You can check the [Global Ecovillage Network](#) for ecovillages in your country and seek collaboration. The network [“Yes to Sustainability”](#) promotes trainings, seminars and youth exchanges in ecovillages and other sustainable projects in Europe. They also offer support for young people who want to organise a youth exchange on sustainability topics.
- **A space for casual learning:** [casual learning](#) addresses people right where they are and informs about everyday sustainability issues – short and easily understandable. For example, the sustainable seminar centre [Villa Fohrde](#) in Germany has so-called “topic rooms” that address issues like green mobility, water or light pollution in an informal way; with books, maps, card games ... So even guests who come for an activity that has nothing to do with an environmental topic can for example find the question: “How did you travel here?”, and learn about sustainable mobility.
- **Green venue check:** how to assess if your potential venue fulfils environmental standards and cares about sustainability? Our [Green Venue Checklist](#) provides a guideline focusing on different aspects, such as water, cleaning products, waste management, energy. It’s an easy-to-use tool that is best applied in a direct conversation with your potential host!

“ We see, and try to show, that catering, food and lodging as well as cleaning, taking showers and going to the bathroom are not things separate from our courses. We like to integrate our thinking and acting actively with our surroundings. ”

Lia Hamminga, fundraising advisor and Natalia Dąbrowska (EKOsmos)



## What do we need to do?



### 1 First steps

- **Choose a venue that is easy to reach:** find a location that is close to as many participants of your activity as possible to increase the number of people that can travel overland. A venue that is well connected to public transportation helps to reduce travel emissions. How far is the closest bus or train station? If walking from there is not possible, think about other sustainable ways to get there: organising a shuttle bus or renting bikes to get to the venue, for example.
- **Look out for certificates:** certificates for sustainable hotels and hostels can be a good indicator that the venue keeps certain environmental standards, for example the Green Key label, the EU Ecolabel or Green Globe. Find more information about labels and certificates [here](#).

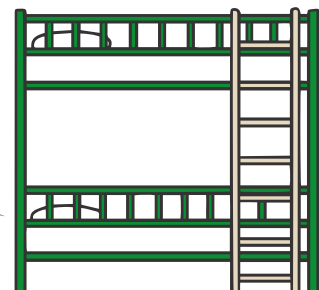




- **Check the accessibility:** to make your activity inclusive, check if the venue is also accessible for people with reduced mobility and if it can cater for their needs. For example: can the space be accessed by a wheelchair?
- **The space - Not big but bright:** we need space to move around, that's for sure! Avoiding overly big venues saves energy for lighting and heating. In the best case, your activity space has lots of natural light. This creates a more natural and friendlier atmosphere, and you can save energy by keeping artificial lights turned off whenever possible.
- **Look out for green spaces:** having green spaces like gardens, parks or forests close by is great for moving your activities outdoors! This saves on electricity and creates enriching opportunities to connect with the natural surroundings, to breathe, to get inspired and perhaps raise environmental topics on the go.
- **Sharing bedrooms:** shared bedrooms are not only cheaper but also more energy-efficient than private rooms. And meanwhile, participants can make new friends.
- **Check the food options:** in case you will eat at your venue space, make sure that they are able to cater with vegetarian meals. If they also cook with local, seasonal and organic ingredients, even better.
- **Engage participants in eco-friendly practices:** talk with your participants about the sustainable principles applied at the accommodation and activity space. To experience a sustainable lifestyle might be a habit-changing opportunity for many. Signs in different areas of the venue can help to remind people of eco-friendly practices, e.g., the right way to recycle their waste, how to compost, to save on water, to unplug electronic devices when not in use, to not have their towels changed every day, etc.

## 2 Carry on

- **Agree on eco-standards with your partners:** in the planning process, agree together with your project partners on the eco-standards you strive, including the expectations for your preferred venue. To have a common idea of what you are looking for will make the search for a venue more effective.
- **Engage with your host about green practices:** the best way to find out about the venue's commitment to sustainability is to talk with them. You can ask what kind of energy they use, how they manage waste, if they use ecological products, etc. Raising these topics might also inspire them – and who knows, maybe they are ready to try something new with you! You can use our [Green Venue Checklist](#) to assess the place. In some countries it might be really difficult to find any venue with environmental standards. If infrastructures are missing, you might evaluate if you can take care of certain tasks yourself, e.g., taking your waste to the next recycling centre.
- **Stay with family-run businesses, local NGOs or ecovillages:** avoid large hotel chains and seek out local and community-led venues that can host you. The [Global Ecovillage Network](#) and [Naturefriends Houses](#) provide lists and maps with locations that strive for sustainability.







- **Invite your host for a talk:** providing opportunity for an authentic talk about the place you are staying at strengthens connections with your surroundings and the people that are hosting you. What is the history of the place? What are they doing in terms of sustainability? What are they struggling with? It can be a great conversation starter about sustainable initiatives during your activity.

“ Save money by befriending good people and organisations that let you lend their space. Build your network of good accommodations and seminar venues and stick to them. Of course, treat your relations and benefactors with honour. Many organisations, companies and individuals would love to be in touch with young and enthusiastic organisations like yours. Think about what you bring to them, what you have to offer. ”

IJmert Muilwijk, Entrepreneur, policy maker, former youth leader

## 3 The last mile

- **Make the venue an integral part of the programme:** let participants actively discover and reflect on the venue and the space they are using. Wander through the venue with “green glasses”. Do an “eco-scan”: which eco-friendly features can you find? What could be improved? Think together with your group: how can you make a mindful and responsible use of the space and resources, like water, light or heating? Agree on common practices during your stay. Share your findings, ideas and recommendations with your host and encourage them to keep on improving their sustainability policy.
- **Integrate casual learning elements:** think about how you could use the venue as an informal learning space about sustainability, even if your activity itself does not address the topic. For example, place some info material or quizzes about fair trade products in your coffee break area. Hang up “did you know” facts about water in the bathrooms. Design a table napkin for the dining room with information on global issues. The possibilities of casual learning are endless!
- **Explore green building techniques:** what does a truly sustainable building look like? What are eco-friendly ways of constructing houses for the future or improving existing ones? Dive into green building techniques – get inspired, share it, talk about it with your hosts.

### Food for thought

- What is your key takeaway from this chapter?
- When assessing your venue choices: what is already done well and what needs improvement?
- What will you do differently in the venue arrangements for your next educational youth activity?

### Further reading

- [Sustainable Event Guideline JINT](#)

### Practical tools

[Green Venue Checklist](#)

### How can I find green venues?

- [Naturefriends Houses](#)
- [Global Ecovillage Network](#)
- [Bookdifferent](#)





# Food



## What is sustainable food?

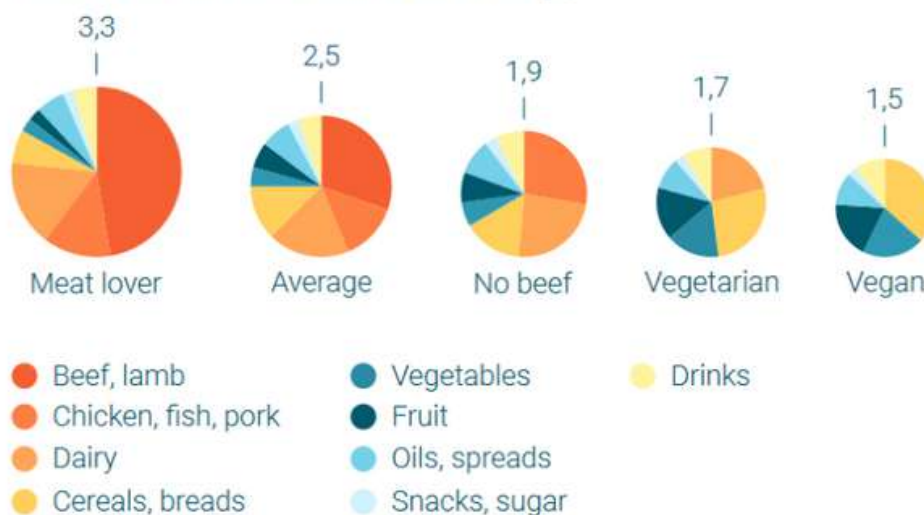


A colourful salad with seasonal greens and flowers. Fresh potatoes with rosemary from the local farmer. Homemade veggie burgers with a sun-dried tomato paste. Tasty, nutritious meals are the motor by which your youth activity keeps running.

Focusing on food is also a great gateway to make your activity eco-friendlier and learn about sustainable practices. Ideally, the food served during your activity is mostly plant-based, seasonal, organic, locally sourced and produced under fair conditions. In short: it's good for both people's and the planet's health.

A good start for this is getting familiar with what's in season in your region and how to cook delicious vegetarian and vegan meals. Don't worry: it doesn't have to be complicated and expensive. You can learn as a group and there are many initiatives out there to support you!

Comparing carbon footprints (t CO<sub>2</sub>e)



All estimates are based on the average food production emission for the USA. This emission includes emissions from the supply chain losses, consumer waste and consumption. For each diet type an equal intake per day (2600 kcal) is assumed.

Sources: ERS/USDA & <https://shrinkthatfootprint.com/food-carbon-footprint-diet/>

Source: [Sustainable Event Guideline JINT](#)



## Why is it relevant?



The global production of food is responsible for one third of all planet-heating gases emitted by human activity. You probably have already heard that meat is especially bad for the climate: The use of animals for meat causes twice as much pollution compared to producing plant-based foods. Moreover, meat production is related to deforestation, water pollution and animal cruelty. Intensive farming and fishing practices are the main drivers of biodiversity loss on land and at sea.

Food waste is another major contributor to climate change and accounts for 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Roughly one third of food produced globally for human consumption is lost or wasted. Did you know that an average trash bin in The Netherlands contains more nutritious food than 60% of the children worldwide have access to (Holleman, 2019 in Fork Ranger)? By reducing meat in your meals, avoiding food waste, serving organic and seasonal food during your activity, you can contribute in a great way to sustainable development.





## What are the good practices?

- **Veggie food as the standard option:** many youth projects, especially those about sustainability, already make good experiences with offering a plant-based diet. But simply reducing the amount of meat has already an impact. Important: inform your participants beforehand about the diet and talk about your motives!
- **Community cooking:** cooking is an ideal activity to connect people and learn about culture and sustainability. Who knows delicious vegetarian recipes? What can we buy locally and what is in season right now? Why not rent an (outdoor) kitchen for a day and organise a cooking session? Maybe you can even cooperate with a local farmer or garden community and invite some neighbours to your event?
- **Initiative to avoid waste:** be mindful about the waste and leftovers that are created when buying, preparing and eating meals. Say “no” to plastic-packed single servings. Calculate how much food is needed for your group and adapt it during the activity. Save leftovers to serve them in the next break. Or make it a creative challenge: what could we do today with yesterday’s rice leftovers? Stuff some peppers, for example.



## What do we need to do?

### 1 First steps

- **Go for less meat:** start with some meat-less meals. Try to reduce or avoid especially beef, which has the highest carbon footprint of all animal-based products. Make vegetarian meals the standard option of your activity. Instead of asking participants “Do you need a vegetarian diet?”, ask them “Do you need meat?”.

“Take into account that for certain participants meat is very important. Thus, offering a less meat or meatless diet can be quite disappointing, even distressing the first time. Take it slow and lead by example. Explain that all the nutrition is there, repeat this as many times as needed, and say why you do it; and don’t expect that everybody will change their eating habits overnight. On the other hand: if you have a decent, good and very nutritious meal, without meat, you have been taken care of.”

Paata Alaverdashvili, freelance project manager and facilitator

- **Offer local and seasonal food:** check what’s in season in your region and buy fresh food from the local market or other local suppliers.
- **Check food labels:** there are several labels that help you to identify ecological and fair-trade products. You can find an overview [here](#).
- **Reduce packaging and single-use plastics:** avoid single-use packaging for food and snacks. Make sure that there is reusable cutlery and plates. If you organise picnics or take-away lunches, think about sustainable ways to pack the food, such as lunch boxes or [beeswax wraps](#).



- **Avoid food waste:** calculate the amount of food you need beforehand to avoid leftovers. Store leftover food to serve it the next day, transform it into a new dish or donate it. If you are not responsible for cooking, make sure the hotel or your caterer adapts the amount of food offered per meal pro-actively based on consumption. Also check out [these tips on how to reduce food waste](#).

“ From the porridge in the morning we made delicious oat cookies for the evening tea. We reduce food waste to an absolute minimum. But the key is: cook so tasty that nobody misses anything. Food is emotion. Delicious food is what it is about. ”

Lia Hamminga, fundraising advisor and Natalia Dąbrowska, EKOsmos

- **Check if tap-water has drinking quality:** in countries where you can drink tap water, you should definitely go for this option! You can pimp it up with lemon, lime, mint or other herbs and flowers. If the local tap-water doesn't have drinking quality, opt for big water bulks instead of buying small water bottles to reduce waste.
- **Bring your own bottle:** ask participants to bring their own drinking bottles or cups to refill with water. You can mention this in the Infopack providing practical information before your educational youth activity.
- **Fair coffee breaks:** look for [fair trade](#) coffee, tea, sugar and chocolate for your coffee breaks. Have thermos bottles with hot water and coffee ready, don't heat per cup.
- **Make your own juice:** instead of buying bottled juice, you could provide fresh fruits and a juice press so participants can make their own juice. It also makes a nice side activity.

## 2 Carry on



- **Cater with a plant-based diet:** make vegetarian or vegan meals the standard diet in your activity. Take into account that good vegetarian or vegan cooking requires a different skill than cooking meat. Be sure to make it tasty, otherwise it will just confirm people's stereotypes. If you don't cook yourself, talk with your cooking team beforehand about your expectations and get them on board of your mission. You could provide ideas for seasonal vegetarian recipes, check out the ideas for veggie recipes below.
- **Budget for sustainable food:** if you can, increase the food budget of your activity so you can buy ecological and fair-trade products whenever possible.
- **Talk about it:** don't forget to tell your participants beforehand about the diet offered, and explain your motives behind it in the Infopack and directly during the activity.

- **Create connections with food:** integrate food as part of your learning experience, not as something separate from your programme. An interview with the cook, an investigation where the food comes from, an excursion to a local market or veggie garden, a sustainable cooking challenge, a “hand on the soil” session, a chocolate tasting or an “Espresso Talk”, which you can use to raise topics around sustainability. There is a lot of room to be creative!
- **Support local sustainable initiatives:** check for options to cooperate with local producers – some might produce ecological food without having the expensive certification! For lunch or dinner out, search for a restaurant with ecological and social principles.

## 3 The last mile

- **Recycle food from local suppliers:** local shops, farmers or community agriculture projects sometimes can give away leftover vegetables and fruits. Ask them if they are up for a cooperation with your project. As you don’t know what you will receive exactly, you’ll have to be creative with what you get.
- **Grow your own food:** having a garden is definitely something for the long run. If you can count on a group of motivated colleagues and/or volunteers, you could rent a patch of land or participate in a local community garden. A garden is a wonderful learning space for your educational youth activities and you will enjoy the pleasure of eating homegrown tasty organic food.
- **Try out off-grid methods of cooking:** learn how to prepare meals without using electricity in an eco-friendly way. For example, cook your food on an easy-to-build rocket stove or in a sun-powered solar oven. Or try out slow cooking in a haybox.

### Food for thought

- What is your key takeaway from this chapter?
- When assessing your food practices: what is already done well and what needs improvement?
- What will you do differently in the food arrangements for your next educational youth activity?

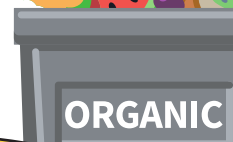
### Further reading

- [Planet-Based Diets Impact & Action Calculator](#)
- [Meat Atlas: Facts & Figures about meat](#)
- [EUFIC: Map to explore seasonal fruits and vegetables in Europe](#)
- <https://www.greenerasmus.org/during-mobility/food>

### Practical tools

#### Ideas for veggie recipes

- [Ideas for veggie recipes](#)
- [Simple Vegan Blog](#)
- [10 cheap and healthy veggie meals](#)
- [Vegetarian recipes for a crowd](#)
- [Forkranger](#)



COMPOST



# MATERIALS



## What is eco-friendly use of materials?

This chapter will look at the materials used in our educational youth activities. Usually these involve a printed programme, a programme overview on the wall, dozens of flipcharts, a pile of sticky notes, name tags, a box full of paper, markers, pens and notebooks, maybe sometimes plastic bottles with water, plastic lunch boxes, and many other workshop materials.

Can you imagine an eco-friendlier use of materials? A different packing list for your journey? Or even an emptier shopping basket for future events?

When talking about eco-friendly use of materials it is about using materials mindfully, considering the environment, and taking the logistics, the ecological footprint, the usability and the costs into account, without giving in on the quality of the event itself. This means taking only what you need, using local, organic, fair and healthy products, respecting the environment and thinking in terms of proper waste management, upcycling and circularity.

Eco-friendly items and materials are defined as being not environmentally harmful. However, we add that you can even help the environment around you. For example, by spreading your self-made compost in a garden. Making an insect-hotel from upcycled materials. Plant some pollinators in empty cans. Besides the negative definition of 'do no harm' there is also the possibility of doing something truly positive. The use of materials is a choice, every day you can make a difference.



Source: <https://www.recycling.com/downloads/waste-hierarchy-lansinks-ladder/>


## Why is it relevant?

Erasmus+ in 2021 had a total budget of €2,9 billion, with 19.000 projects, around 71.000 organisations and close to 649.000 participants (!) in mobility activities. That is more than the whole population of Montenegro or Luxemburg.

Imagine only all the bed linen needed, the shower water, toilet-paper, markers and post-its, working material, cups of coffee and tea, the food eaten – and of course the leftovers. In our research, many respondents named the use of plastic bottles, lack of recycling of waste, food spills, excessive use of workshop materials, pens, papers, block notes, and overall lack of attention for the environment as most often encountered non-eco behaviour during EU funded youth encounters.

This leaves a lot of room for improvement, and the good thing is that we all can be part of the solution and take sustainable actions that have a direct impact on the footprint of a youth activity.





A good starting point is how we consume and organise. You can already do this by asking these three questions before you purchase the materials for your next project:

1. Do I really need it?
2. How can I reuse it? (e.g., using the backside of a flipchart)
3. If not, how can I purchase it in a sustainable way? Less is more!



## What are the good practices?



- **Explaining and showing each other why:** to make your event an eco-success, we have to explain what we do and why. Like the butterfly effect, every touch with each other could make great waves. A big impact you can have on a participant, on colleagues, partners and stakeholders, is to offer insight, a practice, a product. The possibility of behavioural change. You can do this by offering an activity, a tool, a meal, a material with a thought in a different, more mindful and eco-friendly way. If you feel like both coffee or tea, why not tea? It has a considerably smaller eco-footprint. Enjoy!
- **Refusing, reducing, reusing:** say no to some products and services. Keep learning and improving. Do it differently and try out new ways. Focus on our needs, not our wants or habits. Don't offer all the participants whole notebooks and pens by the bunch. It is often not needed. Be clear on what is really necessary. Communicate timely with hotels and restaurants how you work. Have zero-waste as an ideal: count the waste you produce and try to make it less. Don't buy more than necessary. Make sure you really need those big flip chart papers for your sessions. Later, reuse your flip chart sheets (store them, don't throw them away, rinse your coffee cups. Encourage everybody to bring their own bottle and lunchbox.
- **Be smart. Get quality:** know and benefit from suppliers of eco-friendly materials. Buy recycled paper. And did you know you can refill your markers? Don't go for cheap stuff that soon will fill the landfills. Think ahead. Be inspired by nature and the surroundings. You might find a smart solution. Bringing your own bottle with you to re-fill it, is a good start. Buying quality materials and repairable tools might be more expensive at first, but comes with guarantee and a longer lifetime. And later on, such items are often sold more easily as second-hand products.
- **Buying and storing materials:** do you have unused materials from former projects? Can you get it second-hand? Sometimes you have to buy new. Make sure those products are as eco-friendly or as harmless as possible. Store the extra material well (dry/clean/findable) for best use. Make a list of the favourite eco-friendly products and providers. It is fun! Buy local, fair, biological and seasonal.
- **Obtaining/using material mindfully:** We live in times when owning is not necessary anymore. You can share a car. Borrow instruments. Rent material. Hire, inherit, trade, pick, donate, pluck, find, reuse, repurpose or repair things. Assess this before you run to the store. When organising a tree planting activity buying shovels & spades is the most expensive part of the budget. Borrow them. Save money to invest in what it is about: people, trees, workshops.
- **Spread the word about using eco-friendly materials:** if you are very happy about a certain practice, material or thing, tell your network about it. Find good guides and cherish them. Also, when certain eco-products are inferior, inform other people to avoid frustration.



- **Be creative:** make improvising, repurposing, and continuously learning and trying out methods one of the things you and your organisation are good at. Do you know some cool way to reuse envelopes, paper, and leaflets? How do you repurpose used flip charts? Do it. Ever put some edible flower in a water pitcher for effect? Made your own confetti from leaves? Know 15 uses for lemon, orange, and banana peel? Have a plan for your scrapes, teabags, and coffee grounds? Well done.
- **Giving gifts that have an impact:** often it is said that the best gift you can give is an experience. Why not plant a tree together? Sow some seeds? Harvest some herbs, dry some field flowers? Handwork, carve, model or bake a souvenir? Give little plants away, organise a plant- or a clothes-swap. Teach each other a skill to take home? We do not always have to buy a gift to pay attention. We can create by ourselves.

## What do we need to do?

### **First steps**

- **Use flipchart paper on both sides:** save papers that are only written from one side to use them as scribbling paper in your activities.
- **Buy markers that are not so thick:** they will not press through to the back of the paper.
- **Re-use the same flipchart:** if you need the same flipchart for various workshops, make sure you reuse them.
- **Consider borrowing instead of buying:** E.g., borrow yoga mats from the local gym instead of purchasing them.
- **Choose local and/or fair providers:** if you really need to buy new material, choose your supplier carefully.
- **Check paper for sustainable sources:** FSC certification is a minimum that you should aim for.
- **Consider using digital tools:** when presenting topics or providing necessary input, digital padlets or other digital presentation applications are a good alternative to paper.
- **Heat only on request:** only heat the space when the participants request it.
- **Just on time:** ask the managers of the event space to turn on the light/heat only 15 minutes before the real start of the event.
- **Brief participants on bringing layers of clothes:** a comfortable jacket/sweater is a good item when in the room. Also, in a chilly room, count that the group will heat it up fast.
- **Don't offer pens & block notes for all:** make them available in the back of the room. Do not offer everybody automatically a block note for just a few sketches.





“As a project owner I made a shopping list of more eco-friendly markers and other materials for a workshop. Still our coordinator buys the cheapest out of a reflex. You must make it clear that some things we should buy are a bit more expensive. You need to convince your whole organisation about this, but also realise that we have different positions and are rewarded differently for different behaviour. I speak from the content side, where sustainability, mindfulness and eco-friendliness are important and appreciated. However, a logistics coordinator will be rewarded when organising travel and shopping's efficiently, reliably, at the lowest cost possible. Talk to each other and change step by step.”

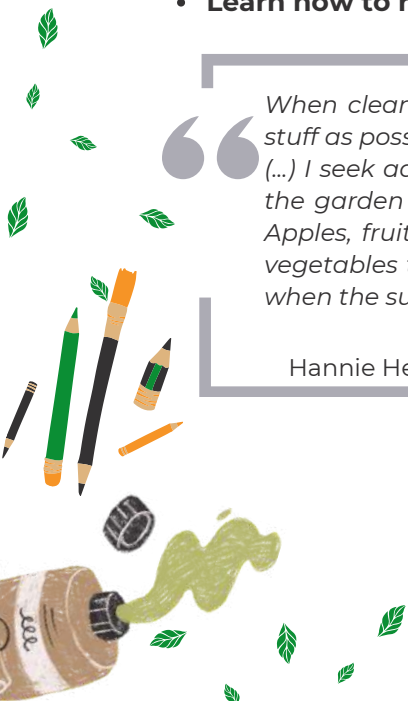
Paata Alaverdashvili, freelance project manager and facilitator

## 2 Carry on

- **Check and try out:** reusable flipcharts, refillable markers, and apply reusable napkins.
- **Know which materials are on location:** make use of objects and tools present, not having to buy them.
- **Plan your activities on time:** so, you know which materials you will need, and have sufficient time to organise it.
- **You don't have to get everything yourself:** you can also ask participants to bring things, such as blindfolds or scarfs, cups/bottles...
- **Give your hotel/venue useful feedback on eco-friendliness:** share your observations, do not hold them back, it might be the impulse they need for improvement.
- **Use a bike or walk:** going shopping? Challenge yourself to do as much as you can by bike or walking.
- **Build a network to lend/borrow things:** if you know who has what you need, do not hesitate to make borrowing a recurrent affair. Also, say what you have at hand, and make it accessible for others.
- **Learn how to repair:** invest in reparations. It can be fun, [check here](#).

“When cleaning I use original stuff like vinegar, soda and green soap, as least mixed stuff as possible (...) We don't throw away any food (...) Try to bike and use the train a lot (...) I seek advice, read about it, invest time talking to advisers, technicians (...) We use the garden for food, herbs and fruits. We make tea ourselves, from our own garden. Apples, fruits, berries. We use our basement for storage and sheds too. We also buy vegetables that are already a bit old, not so pretty. (...) I learned how to use electricity when the sun shines. Previously I did this at night when there was an energy surplus.”

Hannie Hermán Mostert, sustainable life-style expert, activist and an example for many



## 3 The last mile

- **Do your own wild plucking event:** dehydrate the plants picked and make your own organisations health-tea as a Christmas giveaway.
- **Try to run your event with zero or minimum waste:** aim at reducing as much waste as possible at your events. See here for a [guide](#) on how to do so, and [here](#) for examples of other organisations.
- **Upcycle materials:** when you do not use some materials anymore, try upcycling them to give them a new function and life.
- **Have a developed list of eco-products and suppliers:** note down where you find the products you like, update the list and share it with your colleagues and partners.
- **Build in regenerative elements:** planting, gardening, cleaning up the neighbourhood are always good activities that bring added value to your events.
- **Make your own:** soaps, detergents, beauty products, seasonal lemonades, teas; all this can be done by yourself. Organise gifts and Christmas presents without having to go to the shop.
- **Plant, harvest your food:** maintain the green around your training location.

### Food for thought

- What is your key takeaway from this chapter?
- When assessing the materials, you use: what is already done well and what needs improvement?
- What will you do differently in the materials during your next educational youth activity?

### Further reading

- How Bad are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything, Mike Berners-Lee,
- Materials and the Environment: Eco-informed Material Choice, Michael F. Ashby.

### Practical tools

- Decluttering in practice. [Getting rid of unnecessary stuff step by step with Marie Kondo.](#)
- find and learn about [European Eco Labels](#).
- and which ones would be 'best'?
- Eco Font for printing: <https://ecofont.com/>

### Useful search engines

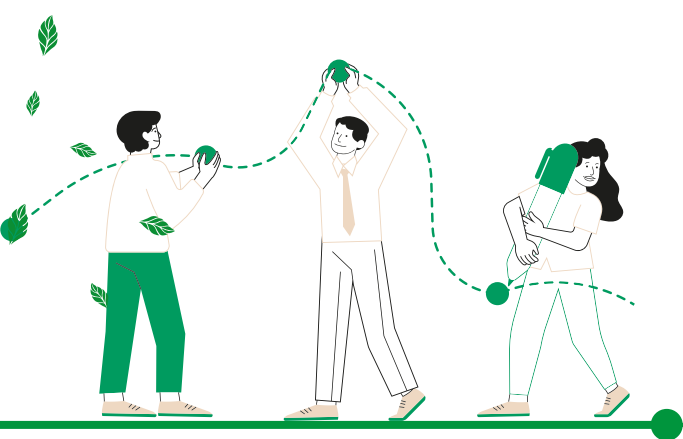
- [Ecosia](#). Search engine that plants trees.
- Apps: [Giki](#). Carbon calculator. Think carbon, cut carbon.
- [Eco Scan](#). App that helps to separate waste based on barcode.

### Reusable material for workshops

- Inspiration on [sustainable post-its](#), [refillable markers](#) in the office [here](#) and [here](#).
- Reusable notebook: use it up to 500 times by [Moyu](#).
- Hot drinks/your cuppa Joe: [coffee](#) and [tea](#) at home and in [the office](#).



# COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS

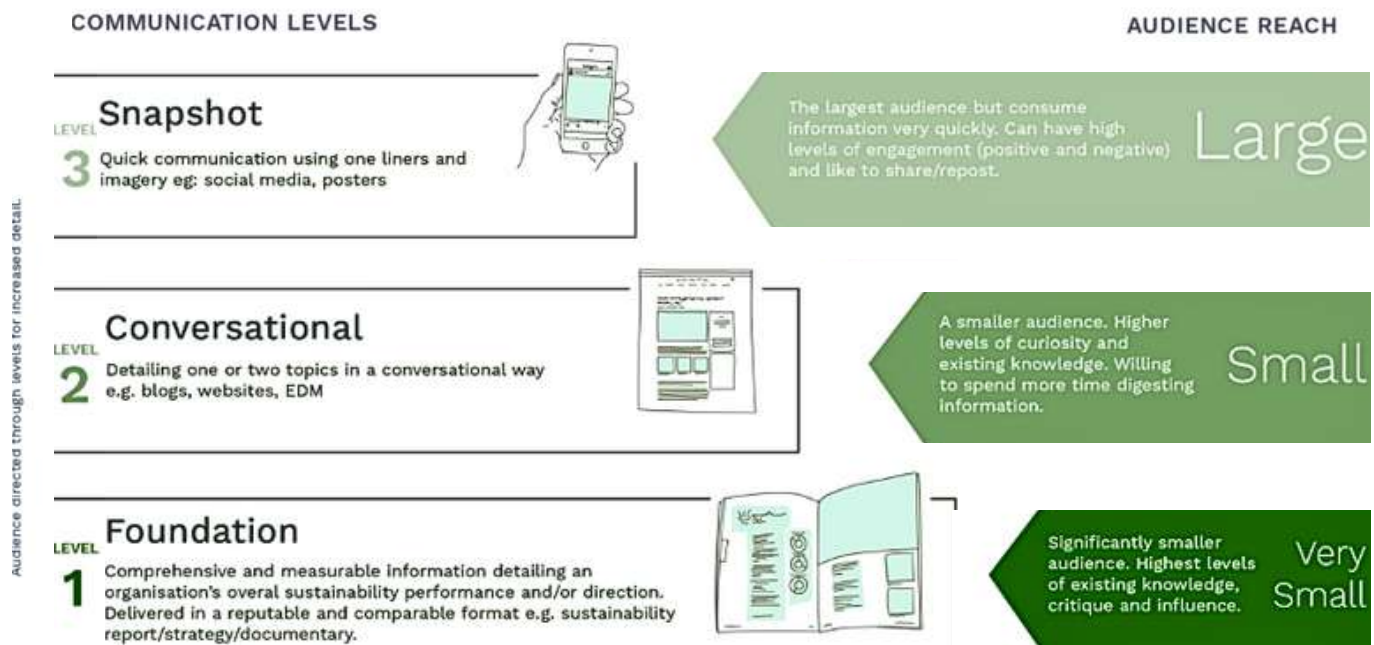


# What is sustainable communication and collaboration with partners?

Firstly, it is about designing and implementing projects together, in a way that makes eco-friendliness a main priority. This might require a conversation within your own organisation and with your partner organisations about what working in an eco-friendly way means and which measures this implies. It also includes being committed, transparent and accountable in your sustainability standards, goals and means and communicating your values, aims, actions and findings to the outside world in the quest for best eco-practices. Work only with partners you think you can rely on, who meet your level of expectation and eco-practice and who are willing to invest, to learn and discover new paths together with you.

Furthermore, it is about continuously applying your principles, and to make your common decisions based on sustainable practice. When plans change, discuss and assess again what the options and best decisions are. Explain why these decisions have been made.

## Audience vs. Level of Detail



Source: [Go Well Consulting](#)

## Why is it relevant?

European youth education events are designed to learn for the better, and aim for the development of our professional and personal future. To literally cross our borders, learn from each other, skills, know-how and culture. To advance our mutual cooperation to help people in their lives and careers. However environmental and climate change problems have no borders and affect the future of all.

To quote one of our survey respondents, Clara Montaner Augé: 'There is no future without sustainability'. In our [survey](#), all our respondents agreed that we can and must do more. We don't have a choice whether we want to make international youth work more sustainable or not. The question is in which way we want to do it, with which type of collaboration, which partners and format, and how we are going to communicate about this to ourselves, each other and the outside world. Do you want to be part of the solution? Do you want to be part of the future? Consider there is barely a good reason not to go public.



“ I think it's crucial to be as transparent as possible in communication. It's important both internally, for acknowledging the work that has been done, and externally, in a way to connect with like-minded agents, and to potentially inspire others. ”

Sabina Enéa Téari, Foresta Collective, Germany



## What are the good practices?



- **Investing in a proper introduction:** Consider first doing a smaller project or task together and only when this works out decide to enfold further collaboration on a bigger scale.
- **Being prepared to say no to a collaboration:** only work together on a project when values are shared, and good rapport is available. Consider quality and focus. Be aware of limited time and resources, and be able to explain why it is necessary to start this project or collaboration.
- **Stay close to your values:** Choose partners that share your sustainability values. Have clear agreements on sustainability practices from the beginning, e.g., on green travel. This also means it is better to start with a small common project before plunging into a big project with a partner you don't know that well.
- **Learn from each other:** keep in mind that not every country or region has the same chances/ infrastructure to be green.
- **Involve also less experienced organisations:** in our [Survey](#), a respondent answered that 80% of their partners are selected for their sufficient standards, experience and policy on sustainability, but some place is also kept for collaboration with less experienced partners with limited ecological background or mission. Hence new organisations also get a chance to enhance eco-friendly thinking, planning and practice.
- **Be honest and actively inquire at partner organisations:** ask how they are doing, what their state of being is. Are they busy, is the organisation stable or not? Find out whether they have the capacity, the sense of urgency, the need, and the motivation to collaborate on your project with/about eco-practices. Also, prepare and answer questions yourself about you and your organisation. What roles could you fulfill and which not? Are you able to organise a residency, training, research or not? Can you and do you want to coordinate an event? Be honest and open to yourselves and your partners.
- **Communicate internally and externally what you do and why you:** Be transparent on your aims and policies of eco-friendliness: this can help people approaching you with expectation management. Be open about your ecology standards, like your position on green travelling. This avoids time explaining whether a collaboration would be a good idea or not.
- **Show quality labels, standards, and certificates on your media:** If you find it important that accommodations have some green certification, why not publish it on your social media?
- **Communicate successes and results:** often we forget to be proud of results and therefore fail to communicate successes and results. Next to that, accept feedback – you can learn something.





- **Think in partnerships:** research shows that we never achieve the best result when we are working alone.
- **Showing your partnership also shows your true strength:** Do not be shy to show the networks you are part of. If you are affiliated to International Young Naturefriends, Yes to Sustainability, or Global Ecovillage Network people can get a better understanding of you and your organisation.
- **Show that you care:** it is not a matter of showing or telling only, we should both show good examples and talk about it for maximum effect and impact.
- **Involve your participants in the outreach and reporting:** they can send authentic and first-hand experience from the activity.



## What do we need to do?



### First steps

- **Establish links to other like-minded organisations and networks:** there is plenty to gain from others and to improve your practices. Cooperating with organisations committed to sustainability also eases project realisation. These types of partnerships will enhance your practices in the long-term.
- **Share the knowledge you already have:** don't be afraid that your knowledge is useless. Be yourselves.
- **Start acting:** start small, take a step at a time. Do not forget to communicate about it.
- **Use digital communication tools as much as possible:** tools such as video conferencing, email, and instant messaging or online work platforms not only reduce the need for travel, but also ease distant communication and collaboration.
- **List useful things:** collect educational activities, suppliers, addresses of accommodation and food/drinks that work conform to the principles of sustainability or even regeneration.
- **Say no to projects:** if a project does not fit your principles, exceeds your capacity or does not match your thematic focus do not engage in it. Explain the reason to yourself and your partner.
- **Be mindful and evaluate the environmental impact of your events and activities:** take steps, alone and with partners, to reduce that impact.
- **Encourage partners to adopt eco-friendly practices:** when working with your international or local partners spread the word and actively encourage them to revise their practices and become more sustainable in their work.
- **Share blunders, learnings and positive improvements:** sharing your learning journey including your failures makes it easier for others to relate to your cause and to try out new practices.
- **Learn from others:** review what others share online or offline to find new ideas and get inspired with ideas, methods, services and products to use or consider applying.







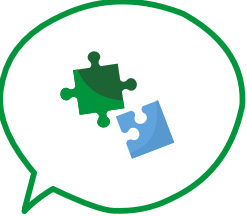
*Try to communicate with your service providers and partners with respect and try to explain to them there is no future without sustainability.*



Clara Montaner Augé, Author and environmental educator, Spain

## 2 Carry on

- **Arrange training for your internal workers and external partners:** trainings can include how to repair things, how to practise energy saving, how to switch from offline to online marketing, best practice of selective waste and composting, wellness on the work floor and how to work with less email. But also consider topics like: how to stay positive? What to do with climate-sceptics? And hands-on workshops like 'Where to start your sustainability journey?'
- **Find representative tools for visualising and measuring:** learn how to communicate aspects of your sustainability policy and produce clear, transparent images, little films, or infographics of it. Like [here](#). You can simply subscribe to channels with daily eco-tips [\\*\(here you find one of our favourites\)](#) and share them amongst colleagues and stakeholders.
- **Produce and communicate your sustainability policy:** make it accessible on your website and other media channels. Persist in your message. It is not nagging, [it is effective](#).
- **Make use of existing networks and agents to spread your message:** connect to influencers. Realise what you have to offer them.
- **Reward co-workers, volunteers and stakeholders for their proactive eco-friendly behaviour and communicate about it:** Your team might have hit the goal of saving water/light this month. Or you introduce a green colleague of the month. Buy an eco-cake for good behaviour. You could return some of the money saved as a bonus. Plant a tree for the best idea with a team or department's name on it. Recognize and acknowledge the work, show appreciation. In our research this need became visible. Show care. Follow up.
- **Educate yourself and others:** keep learning about the impact of climate change and ways to reduce it. Think of an input about this at your next work meeting to spread the word amongst your colleagues and partners.
- **Consider offsetting any emissions:** carbon offsetting schemes or your own planting project are a good way to compensate for carbon emissions that you were unable to avoid.
- **Seek advice and ask for help from your partner-organisation:** others might have had a similar challenge before you and already found a solution. If you are clear about what it is that you exactly need, others might be able to help you out.
- **Stay up to date:** trends, knowledge and know-how of the past is not necessarily useful in the future. How can AI help you to make your Mailchimp more effective? Keep learning and find out.



## 3 *The last mile*

- **Start and foster an effective network:** build your own networks of like-minded organisations and individuals to development your sustainability and eco-friendliness – bringing it to the next level. Set quality standards for cooperation. Stay on track and keep effectively collaborating and communicating on eco-practices, challenges, developments and successes.
- **Try to become the most sustainable organisation in your field of work:** increase your standards. Actively and positively challenge organisations working on the same topic to follow your lead.
- **Develop your own external communication materials:** systematically create infographics, designs, recognizable graphics that clearly communicate your aims, actions and messages. If you do not have own capacities therefore, facilitate competitions or exhibitions of communicators that spread your message. Make it recognizable, sharable and fun for more impact.
- **Develop your own eco-practice education material:** for yourselves internally and your partners it is useful to have a resource material at hand that is easy to use for any new project. This allows for an ongoing knowledge transfer and avoids that good practices get lost. Regularly seek feedback, and improve for wider impact.
- **Show gratitude to your partners:** who help you and make you stronger. Reward critical - maybe not so diplomatic - people and feedback for making you better with their honest feedback and advice.



### Practical tools

- [7 Ways to successfully communicate sustainability.](#)

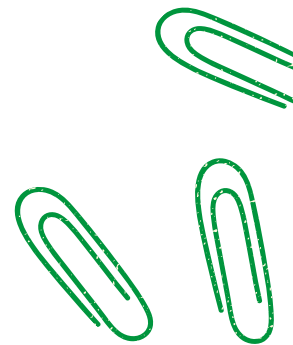
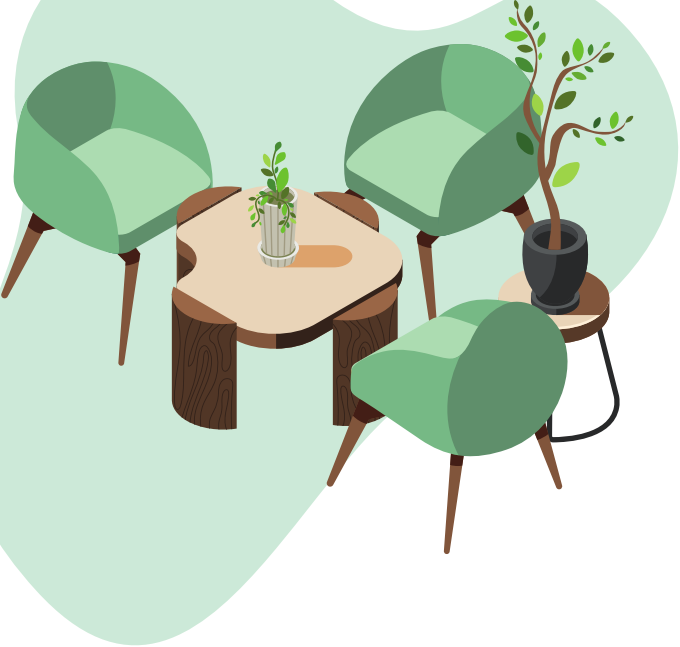
### Further reading

- Read more here on the art of [Green Communication](#).
- Lea Fobbe on [Analysing Organisational Collaboration Practices for Sustainability](#).

### Food for thought

- What is your key takeaway from this chapter?
- When assessing communication and partnership practices, what is already done well, and what needs improvement?
- What will you do differently in communication and collaboration with your partners during your next educational youth activity?





# What is eco-friendly practice in the office?

Focusing on the European youth mobilities itself, this handbook also addresses the eco-friendliness of our offices. This is where projects begin and end.

In the office we design, monitor, report & evaluate projects, we organise thoughts, share ideas and meet people. Shouldn't this place reflect values of sustainability and ecology? Like households, offices take a great toll on the climate: by emissions, consumption of resources, and production of waste. Thus, it is fair to apply the principles of eco-friendliness in our office.

It is practising what you preach; in education, consistency is not a luxury but a must. To be an environmentally friendly office simply means: having a lifestyle that is better for ecosystems and the environment. In other words: your office life should breathe sustainable thinking, action and consumption. All is connected with nature: housing and tools, energy use, the coffee break, lunch, and printing.

In an environmentally friendly office, we look closely at what surrounds us. We look at lifetime circles of furniture & instruments. We don't print, or we print as green as possible. We consider the carbon footprint of the housing, heating, travel and meetings, the website, use of paper, drinks, snacks and gifts. We can literally green up the office by placing plants and even gardening; by collecting rainwater. We can upcycle trash, and do outings, voluntary work the green way. But we can also celebrate in the eco-friendliest way. That is what this chapter is about.

## Top tips for making your office greener

 <p><b>USE RECYCLED MATERIALS</b></p> <p>When buying printer paper, look for recycled paper with a high percentage of post-consumer content and the minimum of chlorine bleaching.</p>	<p><b>START SMALL</b></p> <p>The little things make a difference. Buy Fair Trade tea and coffee in bulk for your tea breaks. Put a small recycling bin under each desk, and eliminate the use of disposable cups by asking colleagues to bring their own cup or mug into work.</p> 
<p><b>REDUCE WASTE</b></p> <p>Buy supplies in bulk so that shipping and packaging waste are reduced, and reuse the shipping boxes. Recycling printer cartridges is often free, and recycled replacements are cheaper than new ones.</p> 	<p><b>DINE OUT</b></p> <p>If you want to leave the office for lunch, try walking or cycling - it's healthier, better for the environment and it'll save on petrol costs.</p> 
 <p><b>SAVE ENERGY</b></p> <p>Many appliances have "standby" settings that draw power—sometimes as much as 15-20 watts—even when they're turned off. Make sure all the tech that can be completely switched off, is, by pulling the plug.</p>	 <p><b>SWITCH IT UP</b></p> <p>Artificial lighting is responsible for 40% of electricity consumption in a typical office building. Change your lightbulbs to energy saving bulbs, or install motion detectors so lights aren't left on unnecessarily.</p>
<p><b>DINE IN</b></p> <p>Bringing lunch to work in reusable containers is a greener (and healthier!) way to eat at work. Bring in your own reusable plate and cutlery if your office doesn't provide them.</p> 	<p><b>DIGITIZE</b></p> <p>Cut back on printing as much as possible. Don't print emails unless it's absolutely necessary, keep your company manuals or handbooks online rather than distributing to staff.</p> 
 <p><b>TRAVEL GREEN</b></p> <p>1/3 of the world's gas emissions are because of vehicles, therefore, ditching your car and walking or riding public transport helps to lessen them.</p>	 <p><b>GO GREEN</b></p> <p>Turn the office green with plants! They absorb airborne pollutants and emit healthy negative ions and oxygen into the air. (Plus they look good!)</p>
 <p>120 tons of steel could be saved if every UK office worker used <b>one</b> less staple a day.</p>	

Source: [BdR](#)



## Why is it relevant?

In our survey, we found that people working from the office, who are not directly involved in the field, are not fully in touch with the eco-challenges in the field. Therefore, we sometimes miss their engagement in eco-friendly practices: ecology is not the thing equally prioritised, compared to aspects like costs, timeliness, administration, and safety. An example of the difference in role: a facilitator would like to work with eco-friendly materials and repeatedly asked for it, but does not get them, because colleagues of logistics and management who are responsible don't buy them.

Offices cause a great output of emissions; office life worldwide has a huge ecological footprint. Sustainable workplaces encourage employees to use natural resources responsibly. It means conserving energy, water, and other resources, while still producing the necessary products or services. By creating a healthy environment, organisations can reduce their impact on the planet and protect valuable resources. Making green improvements to an office has a beneficial impact on energy costs but also on employee wellness and productivity. Sustainable office space is healthier to work in, has better air quality, and uses less energy, compared to offices that have not made green office improvements. So not only the quality of the final product, the work process but also the employee will be better off!

Over 3 billion trees are cut down every year for the purpose of paper packaging, not included here are other printable, letters, leaflets, menus, and visit cards, amongst others. But also delivered food is an extremely large polluter. Time to rethink this all as the ocean already contains 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic, and probably a lot more by the time you read this. Would you like a (plastic) straw with that drink you ordered? Let us see what we can do ourselves.



## What are the good practices?

- **Green housing, green offices, a trend that will not stop:** Is your office sustainable or should something change? Find out whether you truly need an office and how strictly you need those workplaces. Find a place with high energy efficiency, and a good energy label, that is reachable by public transportation. Space matters, so consider carefully if a bigger space is really or if sharing office space with other organisations or short-term renting of meeting space is more viable. Know your building and its best use. Keep the sun shields up in the winter, embracing free warmth. Hang up curtains at the entrance to prevent heat leakage. Lower the office temperature. Think of reflective insulation foil behind the heaters, foil on windows, foam between walls, infrared heaters, LED lamps, ventilation, water-saving buttons, eco-deterrents, towels instead of paper towels, eco-friendly toilet paper, plants for air purification and relaxation but also herbs for tea and to upgrade your lunch.
- **Alternative working places:** flexible working places save money, resources, and the environment. Many office spaces are not fully or barely used. Make it normal that somebody can work on 'your' table too. Put your workplace in order after use, so somebody else can use the workplace. Leave it cleaner than you would leave it for yourselves.
- **Invest in future-proof furniture:** get, find, buy second-hand furniture. When buying new, make sure it is a cradle-to-cradle product that is certificated.
- **Make smart choices for phones, devices, and apps:** when in need of smartphones, consider the Fairphone. Don't get everybody a new phone every once in a while, but do these needs-based. Social media content makers probably will need a good camera, but not everybody. Make a round at the end of the day shutting down devices that are not being used. Consider having standby killers.





- **Refuse and reduce printing:** strive to go digital, refuse to print, or reduce your printing to the strict necessary. Reduce your ink use through smaller design, the use of eco-fonts. Use and reuse recycled paper. Use a multifunctional printer. Only turn it on when using it. Share a printer with other organisations or go to eco-print shops. If you really need stickers, there are eco-friendly ones too.
- **Travelling to/from the office:** empower yourselves and colleagues to travel by bike and public transportation. Consider having a 'company' bike. Try to get season tickets or reduction cards for public transportation.
- **Water and other drinks:** all are great chances to quit polluting behaviour and to choose the proper approach. Use tap water instead of bottled water. Pick your coffee and tea carefully, in the long run it matters. Don't boil more water than needed.
- **Give gifts and goodies wisely:** avoid plastic junk, things in wraps. Try to give sustainable and useful gifts. Consider self-made gifts; a smile, attention, a good word, a well-placed compliment. You have to give a pen, consider a sustainable one. Or even one that you can plant and that gives flowers. Alcohol, like a bottle of wine, is problematic. Rather give a bottle of good olive oil: a classy product, healthy too. You will use it often and it lasts longer. Further, consider experiences instead of things: a guided tour, a tasting, or a workshop, a nice digital photo as a follow-up instead of a bag, a power bank, or a USB-stick with a logo on it.
- **Repair before buying new:** investing some time in checking and repairing things helps to treat materials more consciously. Quality control of devices is a chance to point out costs: using devices and material mindfully is everyone's task. Together we save.
- **Green banking, insurance, electricity providers, pension funds, web hosting:** Phone and internet bills, salary and insurance administration, banking, electricity and heating in the house? Find the greenest of provider and move to them.
- **Recycle well:** refusing and reducing whenever you can is key. *If you end up with stuff, upcycle. Be creative. Reuse wrapping for the next gift. The backside of a paper serves for 5-10 memo notes. Compost the compostable material. Divide materials logically. Tell your colleagues the costs of waste.*
- **Communicate your practices:** inform others in an engaging way about your eco-standards, how you work, to be remembered by colleagues, visitors, partners. Be kind, don't nag, but be clear. Find advice and listen. Within those boundaries let everybody be creative in how they communicate; when people are involved, success is more likely.

“When we are working in the office it is more common to reuse everything we have here. For example, if we have plastic bowls, we use them in our workshops for planting. We are making compost and it is easy to not waste food. When buying food, we use reusable bags.”

Raluca Dumitrescu, Project Manager, Head of Sustainability, Group of the European Youth for Change





# What do we need to do?

## 1 *First steps*

- **Quick eco-scan:** walk through your office/workspace (alone or together) and note down your observations. Discuss this with your colleagues.
- **Measure your energy use:** find your electricity and water meter and monitor your consumption to spot energy peaks. Plan and implement measures to reduce your electricity and water consumption.
- **Agree that an eco-friendly office is important:** discuss with your colleagues what an eco-friendly office means to you and why it is important.
- **Do the simple things immediately and one by one:** taking action is important, do it right away, and do not postpone; this way you build good habits e.g., write the date and name of food in the fridge. Agree to turn off the lights when you leave the space as a last person.
- **Bring a classic reusable lunchbox to work:** Prepare your sandwiches at home. [Watch this to motivate yourselves.](#)
- **Make quick, attainable adjustments:** weather seals, foil on the windows, and reflective foil behind the radiator. Very affordable electricity savers.
- **In wintertime:** heighten the sun protection when the sun shines. When opening the windows, do it at the warmest moment of the day, usually at noon.
- **Organise warm sweater days:** lower the heating temperature by a few degrees.
- **Buy only refurbished equipment:** buy second-hand computers, mobile phones, and other technical equipment you might need for your work.
- **Encourage carpool/car share:** support your office team to coordinate their travel to work to reduce car emissions.
- **Dress down in your office:** opt for a less formal dress code in your office, turn air conditioning lower or even off on the hotter days.
- **Have veggie/vegan food:** introduce new food and tastings now and then to reduce meat consumption. Have eco-friendly lunches and parties.
- **Eco-friendly soap, toilet paper, fairtrade coffee and tea:** encourage the use of thermoses. Have a tap-water-only policy. Be careful when you buy coffee or tea and opt for fairtrade products.
- **Do eco-friendly team-building activities:** invite your team to sustainable voluntary work e.g., planting trees to create actively a positive impact on the environment.
- **Display your green office guidelines in your office:** design an appealing, clear, concise, and fun paper detailing your sustainable office guidelines and practices. Hang it up in a central place in your office for everyone to see and read it.





- **Tidy up your digital work life:** also, in the digital space we leave environmental traces; so clean up your digital workspace as well.
- **Put more plants in the office:** plants help purifying the air, lowering stress and making absence/sick numbers drop.
- **Promote reusables:** that is easier than one might think; use bags for fruits, towels, cleaning wipes that carry promoting message.

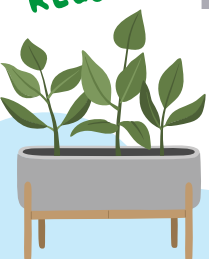
## 2 Carry on

- **Buy a water boiler with a water measuring pump:** such a device allows you to only boil the amount of water you really need.
- **Do a climate check:** propose your colleagues conduct a climate check of your organisation.
- **Reuse your coffee grounds:** try to reuse and repurpose your coffee grounds for example as compost or skin care or for growing mushrooms.
- **Try out a zero waste challenge:** challenge your office team with zero waste or minimal waste challenge. You can start with a day or week, and then extend the period.
- **Create a list of eco-friendly providers:** for any products you need in your office create a list of providers. This can be for office materials, your office lunch or any other things.
- **Regularly consult your team how to improve your sustainable office guidelines:** hold regular workshops with your colleagues to revise and improve your guidelines.
- **Invest in sustainable tech:** switch to instruments and devices that consume least and are most sustainable and enduring.
- **Become part of the sharing economy:** Join existing or create new sharing programmes with other organisations or collectives for equipment and devices such as printers, cars, beamers, drilling machines or anything else that you might need in your office.
- **Get company bikes:** help your office staff to use sustainable means of transport by investing in bike cycles that are free to use for your staff.



*Eco-friendly is a lifestyle, it starts in your home: recycling, keeping things clean, saving energy, having plants at home, trying to be as self-sufficient as possible. It is a lifestyle that you have to internalise and, if you internalise it with something simple, such as saving water, this will be reflected outside your home, in your work environment, in your community, in your building and in your city as well.*

Andres Libreros, Volunteer at Fundació Catalunya Voluntaria





## 3 **The last mile**



- **Transition to sustainable heating and electricity:** install a photovoltaic, solar system and heat pump for your office.
- **Provide electric charging poles:** to support your office team with their electric vehicles, provide electric charging poles for their convenience.
- **Switch to a sustainable bank account:** check the sustainability of your organisation's bank, and if needed switch to the environmentally and socially least harmful bank. The same applies for your insurance company and retirement funds.
- **Own or share an electric car:** if you need to travel a lot, and a car is a must, then consider an electric office car. You can also share it with other organisations close by.
- **Refund only public transportation:** many meetings require travel for you team and or colleagues: Consider introducing a policy of only refunding public transportation travel costs.
- **Green your web server:** check your current web server provider and compare against others. If you are not using the greenest available, consider to switch.
- **Introduce key performance indicators to your sustainability policy:** develop a sustainability policy with Key Performance Indicators to measure targets and objectives for your office temperature, your electricity consumption, your trash production, the milage of your office vehicles or the distance travelled by public transportation. This helps you to keep your environmental footprint in check. Update it every year.
- **Compost your food waste:** you can use it for your own plants or give it to a local community garden.
- **Use spare space around to grow plants:** use the inside, outside and on top of the office to grow (edible) plants.
- **Measure your emissions:** measure, calculate and get clarity and insight into your organisations' emissions. [Here is an example for a CO2 calculator.](#)
- **Relocate if needed:** work actively towards an energy neutral or energy-positive space; if this means to move your office, do it.
- **Influence your followers:** aim to impact your representatives, participants, volunteers, co-workers and board in lifestyle changes. Organise events to do so accordingly.





### Food for thought

- What is your key takeaway from this chapter?
- When assessing your office practices, what is already done well, and what needs improvement?
- What will you do differently in your office in the upcoming months?



### Practical tools

- [Website Carbon Calculator](#)

### Printing and beyond: the use of a proper font

- Best [eco-friendly fonts](#) for printing
- Best [eco-friendly fonts](#) for webpages

### Useful websites

- Search engine [Ecosia](#) plants trees
- office [Carbon calculator](#) or check the co2 footprint at [Climate Neutral Group](#).

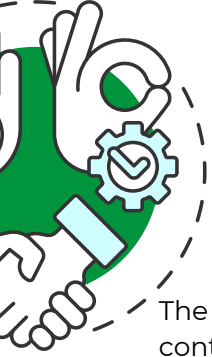
### Green finances, printing and others

- [Fair Finance Guide](#)
- [Eerlijke Geldwijzer](#) (in Dutch only)
- Green banks: one example is [Triodos Bank](#) (with branches in the UK, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands)
- [Printing](#)
- [Eco-Toilet Paper](#)

### Further reading

- [Ecotips.org](#)
- European Environmental Agency: [Good habits folder](#)





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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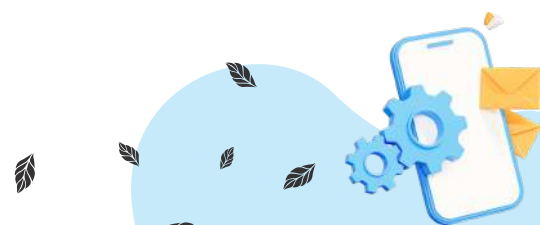
Chamsia Ali, Maylis Haegel, Pedro Miguélez Casas, and Giuseppina Nardo supported us impressively by their research work during the very first stages of the project. Their work has set the ground for this handbook and was invaluable for the structure, content, and practices in the final publication.

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*The team*



## PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

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### Editor

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## Organisations

### EUROPEAN INTERCULTURAL FORUM



Established in 2009 in Germany, the European Intercultural Forum e. V. (EIF) is a non-profit, non-governmental and non-political organisation which operates on an international level in the field of international cooperation and development, peace education, active citizenship, empowerment, and capacity development. With a focus on the South Caucasus, EIF provides learning opportunities to young people, youth workers, volunteers, educators, and people working in civil society. By facilitating international educational events and volunteering opportunities, EIF supports cross-cultural experiences, an exchange of practices, and capacity development of civil society organisations.

## FUNDACIO CATALUNYA VOLUNTARIA



Fundació Catalunya Voluntària (FCV) is a non-profit, independent organisation created in 2007, and based in Barcelona. FCV actively promotes solidarity, peace education, and active participation as tools to transform society. Their three main directions target youth and youth workers by providing opportunities to partake in youth exchanges, trainings, and volunteering projects. It also develops innovative training programmes and resources focused on supporting active social inclusion of vulnerable youth. FCV's network includes the Youth Council of Barcelona, the Catalan Federation of Social Volunteering, the Spanish network of the Anna Lindh Foundation, and United Network of Young Peacebuilders.

## GRAPHISTES DE L'OMBRE



The association Graphistes de l'Ombre was founded in 2006 in Marseille. Plato's allegory of the cave provided inspiration for the organisation's name: when trapped in a cave, one only has a partial and distorted view of reality through shadows projected on a wall. The Graphistes de l'Ombre aim to move people out of their cognitive caves by providing an open participatory space made of training, workshops, and local and international educational programmes that work towards developing an empathic and critical mind. The association follows principles of sustainability, responsible communication, and intercultural pedagogy to empower youth and vulnerable communities.

## MEOUT ASSOCIATION

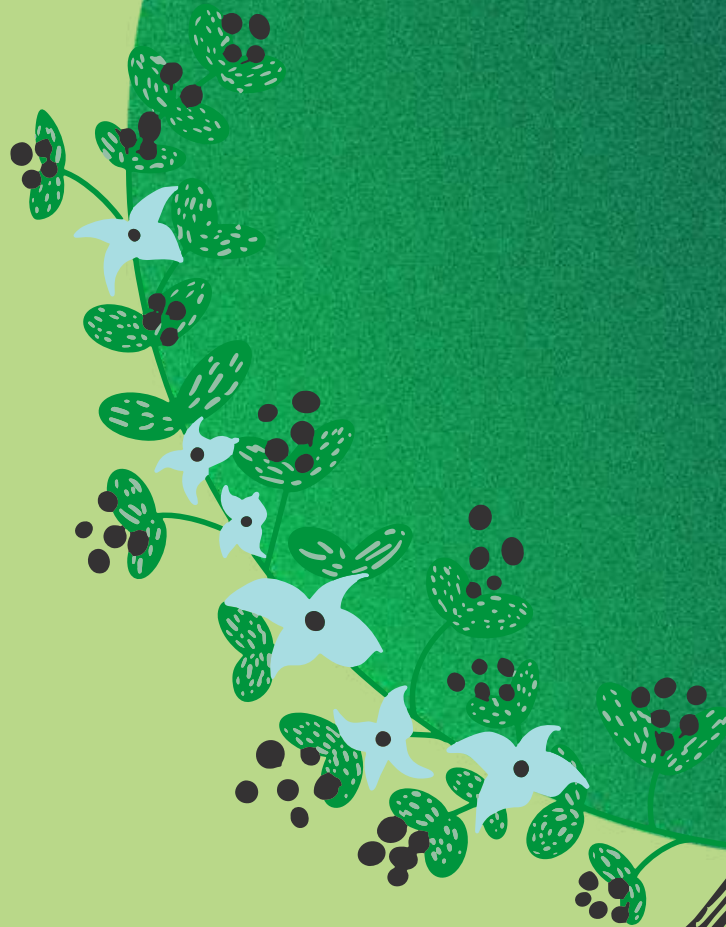



The MeOut Association was registered in early 2014 and has its headquarters in Budapest, Hungary. The aim of the organisation is to find common values in our globalised world, and to strengthen the relations between the EU, the EU's Eastern Partnership, and the Western Balkans through training, exchanges, and conferences. MeOut focuses its work on innovation, non-formal education, social entrepreneurship, and sustainable development.

## STICHTING THE TREE PARTY



A young and enthusiastic non-profit organisation based in the Netherlands, The Tree Party proclaims the importance of trees: planting them, protecting them, and communicating about them. Through a multitude of planting, preservation and awareness projects, the foundation aims to normalise and popularise the protection of trees. Functioning on a grass-roots basis, the Tree Party propagates environmental peace by recognising societal and individual responsibility for nature through public tree planting, workshops, seminars, and advocacy campaigns. On a voluntary basis and in cooperation with international partners, The Tree Party aims at empowering individuals and organisations to experience ownership of nature.



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