

# EDUCATIONAL TOOLKIT

EXPERIENCES & RECOMMENDATIONS  
FROM THE BULGARIAN-GERMAN PROJECT "CONSUMPTHINK"  
ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION  
& LIFESTYLES

ANOTHER WORLD  
IS POSSIBLE!

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	3
Methods and Activities .....	5
Getting to know each other by the topic .....	5
Creative warm-up 'consumer craze' .....	6
Skill sharing .....	7
Comparing consumption in our countries .....	8
City tour on sustainable consumption .....	9
Concepts and trends of (sustainable) consumption .....	10
Policies on sustainable consumption .....	11
Agricultural policies & contemporary food market in EU .....	12
Visiting projects of 'good practise' in your town .....	13
Visit to urban farming/ urban gardening project .....	14
Visit to farmers market in city .....	15
Visit to ecovillage and nature park .....	16
Public action on sustainable consumption .....	17
Starting your own urban gardening project .....	18
Sustainable seminar practise and future planning .....	19
Background Information .....	20
Links and recommendations .....	24

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# INTRODUCTION



## STRUCTURE OF THIS TOOLKIT

This tool-kit aims to give you inspirations and examples on how to design (international) educational activities around the issue of responsible consumption and sustainable lifestyles, e.g. international youth exchanges, work-camps, seminars, school partnerships, etc. The methods can be used individually or connected to design a full programme or programme parts.

*You will find a short description of each method/activity and additional information as a comment in 3 categories:*

**POSITIVE** - what did we like about the method, what did we learn from it.

**POTENTIAL** - what could be connected to this method, how could it be developed further and or connected with other methods.

**CONSIDERATIONS** - what was difficult about the method or what could be difficult.

The methods are ordered regarding general phases of group dynamics and programme designing. We would allocate them like this:

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### INTRODUCTION:

easy to use methods facilitate a get to know each other while already diving into the topic.

*Getting to know each other  
Creative warm-up  
Skill sharing*

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### INFORMATION:

every topic needs some information to understand what is going on and why. A rather big and complex topic like sustainable consumption and lifestyles invite for various background explorations.

*Consumption in our countries  
City tour on sustainable consumption  
Politics of (sustainable) consumption  
Talk with political representative  
Talk with NGO expert*

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### INTERACTION:

learning with all senses means going to see places, talk to people, understand what is happening, how and why.

*Visit good practise projects  
Visit urban farming  
Explore a farmers market  
Visit an eco-park or ecovillage*

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### INTERVENTION:

finally facilitate sessions that go beyond discussion and visits - bring people into creative action, learning how to change things.

*Public action  
Start your own urban gardening project  
Sustainable seminar planning*

## BACKGROUND OF OUR PROJECT AND THIS TOOLKIT

The project ConsumpThink (KonsUmdenken) was conducted in 2015-2016. It featured a number of activities in Germany and Bulgaria including international seminars in which participants from both countries met for a one-week programme.

The tool-kit presents the methods used during our international seminar and are largely linked on the experience we made using this methods. Nevertheless the ideas and recommendations are not only based on this project - the team contributed their rich experience in various international educational projects to this collection. Therefore the tool-kit doesn't just document what we did, but shows how the methods and activities could also be used and adapted for your specific need or interest.

The tool-kit focusses on educational activities dealing with the topic of responsible consumption and sustainable lifestyles. While there are many educational projects in Germany (and other European countries) on this topic we see the need for and a big potential in talking on an international level. First of all it is an international topic: Consumption is a main issue of sustainable development in all European countries while consumer trends are similar in most European countries as well. Any international project on this topic should therefore broaden the understanding for the *common challenge* as well as respective national/cultural backgrounds to be considered.



Last but not least, more countries means more people and means more ideas! Sharing good practise is a gift, sharing our motivation brings joint energy into the efforts for a far more sustainable Europe.

*Main aims of international educational activities on this topic in our understanding are:*

*Learning about sustainable consumption in general and in the participating countries.*

*Getting to know good practise examples of projects, methods, activities on sustainable lifestyles and responsible consumption. In our understanding it is crucial to not just show problems and talk about potential alternatives or show options for individual consumer choices. We want to highlight joint activities that open new prospects for a sustainable Europe.*

*Considering a European (and global) view and developing a joint perspective on sustainable lifestyles and consumption.*

*Comparing specific differences between urban/rural areas, countries and other socio-economic factors. It includes learning about the places people are from – in an international project the activities also always include (informal) learning about cultural standards and backgrounds. Either explicitly when comparing consumer lifestyles in the countries or more subtle when talking about how to plan a public action (and different approaches, political situations in the countries, etc. influence the discussion).*

We hope to give you some ideas and inspirations for running your own activities. If you want to share your experience or have some questions or feedback – we are happy hearing from you!

# METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

## GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER BY THE TOPIC



### DESCRIPTION:

Using the method 'ball bearing' we ask participants questions on their own consumer experience. This allows people to share personal and biographic aspects related to the topic and give their respective interview-partner maybe a funny story to remember.

Method: The group will sit or stand in two circles, the inner circle facing the other so that there will always be 2 participants facing each other. The facilitator poses a question and the two facing participants will have a given amount of time (e.g. 1 - 3 minutes) to talk about it. Then either the inner or the outer circle will rotate to one direction, by this forming new pairs to talk about the next question. The method allows a quick way of getting to know some people of the group and already invites a focus on the topic by asking specific questions.

Some question you might ask:

- *what was the first thing you ever bought / the last thing you bought?*
- *what was the silliest thing you ever bought?*
- *is it easy to buy Fair Trade products where you live?*
- *when and where did you already hear about sustainable consumption?*

### POSITIVE:

- Getting to know the participants their experiences and ideas.
- Bigger variety of information and more opinions.
- Breaking the ice between group members through individual contact.
- Relaxed way of starting to get to know the others.

### POTENTIAL:

- More time: possibility to meet and talk to each group member individually, building individual relationships.
- Summarize ideas and opinions within the whole group to share some insights from this exercise, also to invite additional discussions on questions/ opinions later on.

### ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- All participants chat at same time, which might get a bit noisy. Try to allow enough space between pairs so that partners can focus on each other.

.....  
*Time: 10-20 Min.*

*Resources: free space in seminar room or outdoors*  
.....

# CREATIVE WARM-UP 'CONSUMER CRAZE'



## DESCRIPTION:

Lead the group through a movement exercise inspired by theatre-pedagogics to create a lively atmosphere and a joyful way of dealing with the topic.

Guide the participants through the following dramaturgy:

1. All walk through the room, opening their awareness to the room and to others
2. All walk through the room in varying speeds (facilitator indicates 'speed 1-5').
3. Introduce a moment of 'freeze' where all will stop instantly upon a signal (clap or whistle) by the facilitator until another signal is given to continue their movements.
4. Introduce some gestures: people greet each other when encountering in the room: shyly with a nod, formally with a handshake, cordially with a hug.
5. Add some topic-related moves and tell a story that the participants are following through/ act out: ..you all go shopping and rush through a mall, ... you see special sales and grab what you can get, ...you try on some cloth and check whether you like them. Finally you walk around with a heap of stuff in your arms. But then you realise you already have a heap of things at home and with a cry of relieve you throw all the stuff away, back into the shelves of the shop." (Story can be extended with many more details).
6. Finally you come home from the mall and meet with your friends (participants now stand in pairs or in a circle): You give each other a short massage on the neck and back to relax from all the shopping stress.

## POSITIVE:

- Energizing the participants, supporting group atmosphere.
- Introducing creative methods and physical activities.
- Connects people with all senses, breaking the ice between group members through movement and touch.

## POTENTIAL:

- Can be connected to more theatre work on the topic.
- Connect to topic of well-being: individual needs and ways of interaction versus the product oriented consumer culture.
- Introduce a well-being or wellness moment for every day.

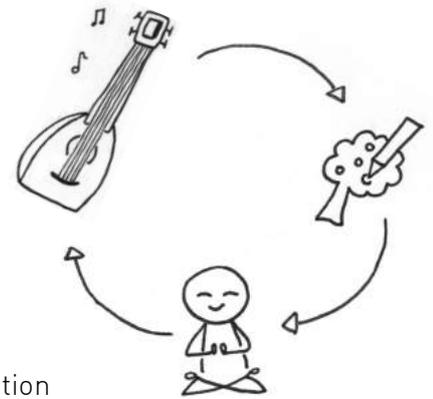
## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- Some people might be too shy to act freely, touching each other might be challenging for some participants... best not to do as very first exercise.

.....  
*Time: 10-20 Min.*

*Resources: free space in room or outdoors to move around*  
.....

# SKILL SHARING



## DESCRIPTION:

A main idea of sustainable lifestyles is to counter the commercialisation of services that used to be community based, neighbourhood assistance, etc.

Therefore organising sessions of skill sharing is useful in various regards:

- you can learn from other participants some practical skills,
- you can share your own knowledge,
- you get to know people and partners to practise your skills together in the future.

The session was dedicated to sharing skills between the participants. Anybody could offer some skill to be shared/thought to the other participants during the session. These skills were shared in our skill sharing: up-cycling, juggling, yoga, traditional dances from Bulgaria, Tango...

## POSITIVE:

- It brings a lot of fun and fosters a good sense of cooperation in the group.
- It creates an understanding of sharing and self-learning.

## POTENTIAL:

- Apart from skills you can also share knowledge, so people offer talks and discussions about certain topics of interest.
- Connect with talk/session about our understanding of learning, education and alternative forms of sharing of knowledge and skills.
- Talk about how to organise a skill-sharing workshop yourself: how to invite others, make people curious to participate and support the once willing to share a skill (especially those that might be a little shy).

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- While it's not likely that nobody has anything to share it might be good to plan a bit ahead and motivate people on time to come up with ideas. Maybe ask participants before the seminar already what they would be able to offer and whether they need anything special for it.

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**Time:** 1-2 hours (depending on the number of skills offered you could have a longer session with two or three timeslots so people can try out more things).

**Resources:** spaces for groups, material for whatever is being shared (best to announce the detailed design of the session well before, so people can prepare and bring whatever they need to share their skills).

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# COMPARING CONSUMPTION IN OUR COUNTRIES

## DESCRIPTION:

Divide the group into small working groups (4-8 participants) mixed from the participating countries.

Invite each group to discuss the following two questions in your group and create a poster (provide flip-chart and markers/paints) with your answers:

- How does consumption look like in your town/place,...?
- How does alternative consumption look like, ...?

*Note:* by phrasing it on towns/city/place it refers to a personal setting and opens it up from the 'national' focus. This also invites a discussion about differences in each country as well and differences between urban and rural areas.

## POSITIVE:

- Small group work allows to exchange on the big trends + details of the topic.
- It facilitates mutual understanding and allows a comparison between countries as well as countryside-city.
- The posters can be used as decorative items in the seminar room and also act as for further reference during the seminar.

## POTENTIAL:

- To have a more narrowly defined topic like food, cloth, waste, etc.

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- Different points of view between different participants from the same country evoke interesting discussions, but it might need some clarification or additional information → connect to methods 'experts talks'

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**Time:** 1 hour or more (30 min. group work, 30 min. presentation)

**Resources:** posters, markers, paints

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# CITY TOUR ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION



## DESCRIPTION:

Take part in a city guided tour on sustainable consumption. It is an educational programme that has been developed during the last 10 years and is available in many German cities and other countries as well. During the tour the group will visit a shopping street and stops in front of various shops. Relating to each shop interactive games provide information about (environmental & social) problems linked to consumer items and possible alternatives, like Fair-Trade, organic products, second hand, etc...

*Topics: clothing, sneakers, coffee, chocolate, IT/mobile phones, cosmetics,*

Some cities might also offer a tour that focusses mainly on alternatives – suitable for groups with more knowledge on the topic. More information about the method and contact to local groups: [www.weltbewusst.org](http://www.weltbewusst.org)

## POSITIVE:

- The tour provides an introduction into issues of (un-) sustainable consumption and demonstrates an attractive method for working on the topic.
- Experience first-hand consumption impressions (as tour takes place in lively shopping area).

## POTENTIAL:

- Discuss how to adapt the method for the respective home-town or place of the participants. (E.g. develop tour for countryside, villages.)
- Compare method with other educational activities on the topic and talk about the basic ideas of Education for Sustainable Development.
- Prepare and run the tour yourself with your group! You need the background material and some preps... allow 3 hours for preparation and 2 hours for the tour.

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- If you are more than 25 people you need to split the group.
- Outdoor activities always depend on the weather (shopping malls won't allow you to run the tour indoors).
- If you have an international group and people are new to the city they might want to do some sightseeing *first* before getting a critical educational tour.

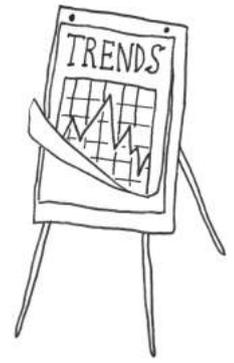
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*Time: 2 hours*

*Resources: tour guide with material*

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# CONCEPTS AND TRENDS OF (SUSTAINABLE) CONSUMPTION



## DESCRIPTION:

A brief input on some main trends to be found in consumption, giving the 'bigger picture' of the topic and allowing to look beyond individual consumer pattern to economics and society as a whole:

- *Mainstream consumerism: still clearly prevailing the markets and keeps growing - global brands, shopping malls, advertising, etc.*
- *Sustainable consumption and Green-washing: also the mainstream market now offers sustainable products, big companies are claiming to be sustainable, lots of new labels of questionable standards are introduced,...*
- *Alternative consumerism and prosumerism: keeps developing but mostly still marginal - eco-shops, fair trade, organic food, recycling, repair-reuse, ...*

Introducing some underlying ideas and debates about (sustainable) consumption, related to politics and change-making:

- *Is society mainly organised as a free market economy where sustainable consumption remains an act of the informed individual or should politics give a stronger framework to guide sustainable consumption by regulating trade and production standards?*
- *Is the individual mainly seen as a consumer who decides by shopping or as a citizen why decides for stronger political frameworks?*
- *What role do educational campaigns play to create awareness and invite action to consume differently and/or influence politicians and politics?*

## POSITIVE:

- Offers different and broader perspectives on the topic, provides food for thought and invites people to think beyond the individual consumer perspective

## POTENTIAL:

- Re-connect the input to other activities, referring to the levels/aspects presented when reflecting other activities.
- Combine with a discussion on how participants regard the role of (sustainable) consumption in their life, in society & economy, in the future.

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- The topic is complex and could be talked about for hours as it touches very fundamental ideas about society (politics, economics). It is difficult to find a fair balance between comprehensive details, general depth, questions & discussion.

*Time: 30-45 minutes + discussion*

*Resources: speaker that knows about topic, presentation tools*

# POLICIES ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION



## DESCRIPTION:

Meet with a representative from an official institution to talk about sustainable consumption and other policies that promote sustainable lifestyles.

*(We talked to a person from the German Ministry of Environmental Affairs, BMUB).*

Get informed about some of the main aspects of environmental policies dealing with consumption and lifestyles, like life-cycle assessments, top-runner programmes, labelling initiatives, etc.

To prepare for the talk it is good to develop some questions in the group beforehand. Maybe not all of the questions can be answered by the representative, but this is an interesting fact on its own and can be linked with the discussion of method 'concepts and trend of consumption'.

Apart from the main information of the talk, it will be a very interesting discussion about the impressions the participants had and what they know about similar policies in their countries and home towns.

## POSITIVE:

- You get lots of precise information on the topic and on government policies

## POTENTIAL:

- Contrast the 'official view' by also meeting with an expert from a NGO and comparing statements on the same topic.
- Compare levels of policies: international, national, local, etc.

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- You are likely to get a positive 'official government view' on the topic only.
- Representatives of institutions not always give a lively presentation, so don't expect edutainment. Be ready to assist by moderating the talk and encouraging questions.
- Some information could be very specific for the respective national context and might need additional information to be understood by the other participants. (e.g. laws and regulations, political debates, etc.).

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**Time:** 2-3 hours (1/3 preparing, 1/3 talk to representative, 1/3 evaluation)

**Resources:** appointment with representative

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# AGRICULTURAL POLICIES & CONTEMPORARY FOOD MARKET IN EU

## DESCRIPTION:

Food & agriculture is an important and for most participants very interesting sub-topic of sustainable consumption, so it is well-worth to focus on.

This session should include a brief historical overview on the structure of farming and food-markets up to the contemporary influence of EU-policies and trends for organic farming, regional distribution, small-scale farming, etc.

Especially when also visiting places like the ecovillage, farmers markets during your seminar it is very helpful to have a more profound background information to understand the situation and the possibilities for change.

## POSITIVE:

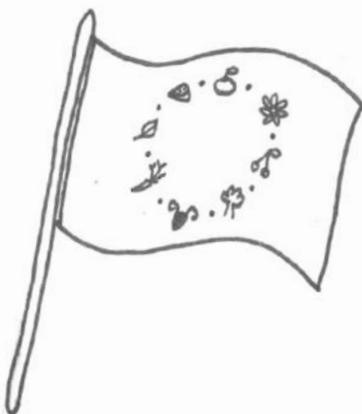
- Useful background information on the topic
- Chance to ask specific questions on history and details of policies, trends, etc.

## POTENTIAL:

- Develop a small role-play to connect to the input session.  
Divide participants into various stake-holders (big farm business, small farmer, politician, consumer, etc.) and have them discuss about recent developments and chances for action.  
It might enhance the understanding of the subject and the potentials for change-making.
- More discussion of ideas for alternative projects and how to support them, e.g. farmers market, regional marketing, etc.

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- You need to find an expert that is also good at presenting and can explain complex issues in easy English.
- The level of knowledge of participants might be very different, you will have to decide where to start.  
You could run a brainstorming/discussion session in the group before the experts talk, to gain a common ground.
- As the talk touches many aspects of the issue there might be a number of questions to be asked - leave enough time for discussion also among participants...  
and if necessary provide additional information, especially EU policy aspects of the topic might not be easy to understand.



*Time: 2-3 hours (1/3 preparing, 1/3 talk to representative, 1/3 evaluation)*

*Resources: appointment with representative.*

# VISITING PROJECTS OF 'GOOD PRACTISE' IN YOUR TOWN

## DESCRIPTION:

Alternatives are all around us, some are more hidden than others, lets go and visit them and learn about their approach and contribution to sustainable consumption!

In our seminar we visited the following projects:

- a repair café,
- a shop that works without packaging,
- Place for food-sharing,
- and finally had dinner in a „peoples kitchen“.

Depending on your home town / seminar-venue there might be more or less projects to visit. Although if you look in detail there is always something that counts as alternative and is inspiring good practise: It could be a small local Fair Trade shop as well, an organic farm, a repair café, etc.

## POSITIVE:

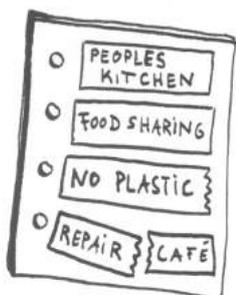
- Get to see real projects and the people behind it.
- Get ideas and inspirations for your own actions.
- The visit will trigger many discussions in the group.

## POTENTIAL:

- Talk about how to set-up and run such projects: e.g. how to organise food sharing in your town?
- Combine visit to places/shops with a game or quiz: e.g. in the shop without packaging: what is hard/easy to find (without) plastic (packaging)? What do I want to buy (and need to purchase extra packaging for)?
- Show the group about the amount of food-waste per day: quiz with the participants. Talk about challenges like very strict hygiene regulations in restaurants and shops and to respect but bend the laws to reduce food-waste.
- Take more time at one of the places and learn more about the „How to do it“ in order to be able to copy it in your home town. Or join the project for a day to learn while working there and by this also supporting it.

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- Some places – especially alternative shops – might be too small to easily accommodate your group. You might need to split the group.
- Make an appointment with projects/shops to avoid irritation...and maybe they can spare some minutes to tell you about their project.
- Inform the group about whether you just look at places or meet people and get a proper introduction. Also inform about details like 'bring empty boxes to the shop without packaging if you want to buy something'.



*Time: 2-3 hours (depending on the number of stops/visits, more than 4 is ambitious. Also depending on transport.)*

*Resources: good planning, if possible make appointments with places to visit*

# VISIT TO URBAN FARMING/ URBAN GARDENING PROJECT

## DESCRIPTION:

The urban gardening projects in Berlin are famous initiatives that are visited by tourists and have become a reference for many other cities to start similar projects. We visiting an „urban farm“ in Berlin and learned about the joy and the specific challenge of starting such a project. People of the garden project gave us a presentation of the project, we had the chance to ask questions and make some comparing with urban gardening in their home towns in Germany and Bulgaria.

It became clear that there is a 'fertile soil' in Berlin in terms of funding opportunities and enthusiasm of neighbours. (In comparison in Sofia more people have some gardens in their families on the country side, the idea of urban gardening is less romanticised and popular yet).

## POSITIVE:

- Visiting a place or project that is yet developing and has some challenges to deal with gives a realistic image of the difficulties for 'alternative' projects.
- Compared to the method 'tour of projects' a specific visit allows meeting the people that are involved in the project and get to talk more.

## POTENTIAL:

- Join them for one day, work in the farm/garden to understand the project better.
- Focus on communication of urban farming: how to organise and spread idea, how to involve people and neighbourhood, how to include educational activities?

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- Depending on weather and season – it's no fun when raining, nothing much to see in winter...

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*Time: 1 hour for a visit, 3 hours if joining gardening work.*

*Resources: if you want to join their work come with respective clothing and ask whether to bring tools or anything else.*

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# VISIT TO FARMERS MARKET IN CITY



## DESCRIPTION:

Most European cities have so called 'farmers markets' where regional products are being sold mainly by the producers themselves. Such markets offer fruits and vegetables, dairy products and meat, but also a lot of processed and packaged goods, like home-made jam, honey, soap, cosmetics and many more. The markets aim at creating a direct linkage between customer and producer and offer direct trade options outside supermarkets.

The market allows to stroll along the stands and meet local producers individually or as small group. Most producers were happy to talk about their products and their production background and share their enthusiasm. We also were invited to sample various of their delicious products!

## POSITIVE:

- Direct contact to the producers to gain knowledge about their work (life, situation, production, products, ingredients).
- Create and increase the understanding for the value of the products and inspire to buy local products in our daily life.

## POTENTIAL:

- Have an educational lecture/workshop before the visit to gain more knowledge about the market - it also helps to generate questions and see problems. (Method: experts talk on agriculture).
- Prepare questions and arrange interviews with the farmers about specific aspects of the topic, e.g. how their production changed, how the market is organised, etc.
- Have a short sharing afterwards or a proper reflection session to point out problems and solutions the participants found 'at the market'.
- Have a meal together with products from the market. (Maybe with the assistance of a small catering service that mainly sources from the small farmers).

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- Depending on opening hours and weather.
- It might be better to make an appointment with organisers of the market or a few sellers to make sure they have time to talk to you.

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**Time:** 1-2 hours (+ transport)

**Resources:** good planning, if possible appointments with places to visit

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# VISIT TO AN ECOVILLAGE AND NATURE PARK



## DESCRIPTION:

Sustainable consumption and lifestyles don't only take place in the big city. The countryside is a very interesting setting for learning about food production & distribution and further holistic approaches for sustainable development. But it also makes people aware of the hardship of agricultural production. So it's well worth to take a day or more to go on an excursion and visit of a village in a nature park or similar area that focussing on topics of small-scale agriculture, ecotourism, etc.

A visit to the country side not just allows to experience nature but offers various aspects:

- *get a different perspective on the consumption topic compared to the city.*
- *get to know small-scale farming and regional marketing approaches.*
- *understand integrated sustainable development, which also includes ecotourism, etc.*

## POSITIVE:

- Direct personal contact with producers of food - local farmers, etc. inspiration by the place, scenery, people.
- View from the periphery: some issues of sustainable lifestyles look different on the countryside.
- The nice environment contributes to a good group feeling, focus and concentration.

## POTENTIAL:

- Include local organic food for your seminar meals: no packaging, no transport!
- If no hostel available maybe home - stay in different houses is possible and you can find a seminar room somewhere.

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- Transportation: getting to the countryside might be difficult with public transport, you 'lose' travel time, are dependent on timetables, etc.
- On the countryside less people than in the city speak English: communication with local people depends on translation for foreign participants.

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**Time:** 1 day at least, better more days with overnight stay.

**Resources:** good planning, contact to local people.

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# PUBLIC ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION



## DESCRIPTION:

Plan and carry out a public action in the city to raise public awareness on the topic of sustainable consumption. The session includes the planning and preparation. It also invites a discussion about such public actions, demonstrations, etc.

(Our flash mob-action took place at Potsdamer Platz in Berlin: the participants were lying on the ground, marking the shapes of the body with chalk. Adding provocative statements, like „I died for your smartphone“ etc. There were no additional banners or leaflets, but a hash tag at facebook so that friends could be informed about the action through social media).

1. *Discussing and choosing a topic, the method of action, time and venue.*
2. *Preparing, getting preps, informational material to hand out, registering with police/authorities, press-info, documentation, practising.*
3. *Carrying out the activity.*
4. *Celebrating a successful action and evaluating the activity + the individual experience.*

## POSITIVE:

- Carrying out a joint action supports the group feeling.
- Invites discussion about democratic structures and legitimate forms of protest.
- It is empowering, afterwards most participants will feel able to join a public action.

## POTENTIAL:

- Work together with local activists to plan and carry out a joint action.
- Use social media to promote the action and increase its impact.
- Do a lecture/workshop how to use social media for politics.

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- You need to check with legal regulations of public actions!
- Public actions can get lively and dynamic, you need to plan and coordinate well! (Also mind language problems and make sure that everybody understood every step of the action clearly).
- Everyone has to know *WHY* the action is done and what it says to be able to identify with it and potentially answer to people that stop and inquire.

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**Time:** 3+ hours (allow 2 hours at least for discussion and preparation, the action itself should be clearly limited time wise, take 20-30 minutes for evaluation and discussion).

**Resources:** good planning, best with a facilitator that has profound experience with public actions, preps for action, check with authorities/legal regulations.

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# STARTING YOUR OWN URBAN GARDENING PROJECT



## DESCRIPTION:

Give an introduction into the idea and concept of urban gardening (if not already part of your programme) and have an area prepared that shall be transformed into an urban garden.

Show the participants some planning methods for urban, public (garden) spaces, e.g. the method of ecomapping – they will learn on which different layers have to be taken into account when designing and eventually starting a garden project. Have the participants swarm out in teams to make a plan of the garden and use the method of „ecomapping“ (see resources chapter).

View all plans and discuss all ideas and try to find compromises on a basic plan - one you can start with straight away!

Now get into action, best to divide the group into small teams:

1. *Collecting rubbish and clearing the area as your plan shows.*
2. *Start some gardening, maybe plant some flowers, vegetables, indicate places where something is growing already and should be given attention*
3. *Add some infrastructure: build a bench, install a trash can, paint a little sign for your garden, create some art with stuff you find, etc.*
4. *Document your action and share with friends online to inspire more people...*
5. *Enjoy a cup of tea in your new garden! :o)*

## POSITIVE:

- Team building  
- group turns into action, following and enhancing group dynamics
- Upcycling - re-use of materials (waste) and aesthetic improvement of the area
- Ecomapping  
- strategic planning is learned by the group

## POTENTIAL:

- Social interactions with and within neighbourhood/ community (social activities in garden project, ecological awareness raising, skill development)
- Could easily be a core topic for a full week of programme!  
(Combined with other methods on food and agriculture topic).

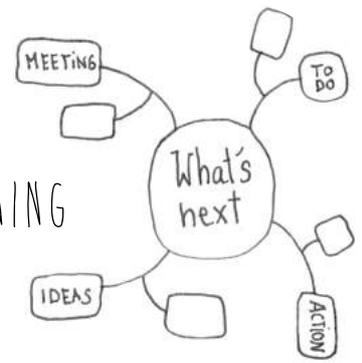
## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- Possible lack of acceptance by the neighbours - consider sustainable support for the garden project in the area.
- Equipment needs have to be anticipated in planning (materials and tools).
- Inform yourself about regulations and laws: what are you allowed to do in public area on the land you designated to be the garden?

.....  
*Time: 3+ hours (at least 1 hour for planning)*

*Resources: somebody with experience in gardening and planning.  
Some tools for gardening, wood for building benches, etc.*  
.....

# SUSTAINABLE SEMINAR PRACTISE AND FUTURE PLANNING



## DESCRIPTION:

When talking about sustainability your project is likely to be monitored carefully by the eyes of your participants: how sustainable are your own products and resources used, how democratic are your structures, etc. Some of them would be easier to solve (like not using plastic bags for a packed lunch on the excursion day), some are more complicated (like travelling between partner-countries avoiding air transport).

Invite a discussion and facilitate a session about this issues: which aspects can be tackle straight away or in the future, like sustainable sourcing of food in the seminar, providing local, organic, vegan food whenever possible, avoiding food-waste, etc.

If you have another seminar/encounter planned (e.g. if partnership between schools) you might start to design an „ideal“ seminar to connect to the topics learned, focussing on the different levels of planning a seminar.

1. *Programme & topics: What topics you want more of?*
2. *Methods and activities: How you want the topics to be addressed, how do you want to learn?*
3. *Framework/organising Structure: how can a seminar about sustainability be organized in the most sustainable way, e.g. hosting a climate neutral seminar?*

Most likely your participants will have an abundance of ideas for educational projects and seminar planning, probably less classroom-bound but more into 'learning by doing' and informal education, a kind of intuitive understanding of 'good educational practise'. (For what came out in our session and was partially included for the second seminar see page 20)

## POSITIVE:

- Makes us clear/do realize that we have to start by ourselves with our behaviour.
- Brainstorm/learn about more alternatives (sharing ideas and skills).
- Self-reflection, reflect daily life.

## POTENTIAL:

- Use it for real planning of next seminar in your project.

## ...TO BE CONSIDERED:

- It can trigger serious discussions about rules and regulations e.g. is there vegan/vegetarian food only? Do we have to travel abroad overland?
- If you include planning of future activities allow much more time and be prepared with information about limits in budget and other regulations.

.....  
**Time:** 2+ hours (30 min. for brainstorming and clustering, forming working groups, 1 h for group work, 30 min. for presentation and discussion).

*If connected with planning of next seminar allow a separate session of 1-2 hours deciding on details and selecting people in charge plus drawing a project plan.*

**Resources:** posters, cards, markers.  
.....

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF CONSUMPTION, LIFESTYLES AND EDUCATION.

Sustainable Development is the global paradigm of the 21st century. After decades of debates there seems to be a global consensus, that sustainability is the necessary direction to be taken. Yet there is lots of discussion about the exact route travel, which exact eco-path to follow.

Taking this setting – we aim at sustainable development yet we are looking for pathways – as a starting point for educational projects on sustainable development we can portrait four references which outline our educational approach and experience in this project – and may give you an inspiration for your project.

### 1. WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT SUFFICIENCY!

The mainstream approach regarding sustainable development as something like 'let us go on like this but make it somehow sustainable' is being dismantled by basic facts: planetary boundaries don't expand and climate change is very real. So slowly but surely a substantial critique of growth is gaining ground, overcoming the mainstream environmental policy of „green growth“, a kind of fantasy compromise between classic economic ideas and modern environmental awareness.

Germany might be regarded as a 'green growth role model', following a growth oriented, export relying economic path while developing high-tech solutions for efficiency, renewable energy production etc. But as important as new technologies and efficiency approaches are – it is unlikely that they will achieve the necessary reductions in resource use, emissions and waste. Last but not least because the re-bounce effect levels many positive results of technological impacts: while each gadget is more efficient we keep on having more gadgets and the turn-over is higher as well.

What might be needed is a discussion of how to do things differently, questioning the role models of sustainable living – the organic supermarket or the own garden? The hybrid car or the bicycle? The concept of sufficiency will remain marginal for a little longer, but rather soon it will need to become a main topic of discussion.



**Our educational activities have to question simply 'greening' approaches and debate substantial alternatives to achieve sustainable development.**

## 2. WHAT COULD SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES LOOK LIKE?

Looking around countries of the European Union we find that general trends are similar: consumerism is a prevailing 'culture' and consumption patterns are becoming more and more similar in Europe. Whether walking in Berlin or Sofia we find the same shops, the same brands, the same products and styles. People are apparently attracted by shopping malls and the apparent endless choices between mass products to express their personality. But beside this possibly frustrating finding we also found similar developments in terms of alternative structures and projects: people caring about organic food, sharing stuff, setting up urban gardens, going by bike instead of car ... and many more.

To understand the challenges for and options of sustainable lifestyles better it is well worth to look into the historical development of our societies to identify 'mental infrastructures'.

When looking into the development of the contemporary consumer culture we see its different historical roots. Bulgaria having been a socialist system until 1990 had a very regulated market. Germany had a similar experience in the „east“ (German Democratic Republic) and a privatised free market economy in the „west“ (Federal Republic of Germany). Of course the present youth generation has no personal memory of the times before 1990, but the consumer patterns are influenced by it. (If you have a mixed group with German kids from 'west+east' it might be interesting to ask about stories from their families). Looking into this historical aspect we gain a more differentiated understanding for the topic as well as for each other's countries. By this education for sustainable development can benefit from a classic approach of citizenship education (or 'politische Bildung') as it also looks into historical developments to understand problems better and by this possibly develops solid approaches for solutions.

By such 'investigations' the group will learn a lot about the reality of life and consumption as well as alternative projects and culture in all participating countries. And it gives you a better understanding of sustainable pathways:

When speaking about sustainable consumption in countries like Germany you may think about organic supermarkets, FairTrade shops, etc. - such 'commercialised' alternatives are less common in countries like Bulgaria, as the market is not yet big enough to sustain many shops of this kind. But when looking into the idea of farmers markets and even small-producers markets, trading 'home-made' products, countries like Bulgaria offer far more of this in the setting of normal markets, where people simply sell produce from their gardens. But it has a very different connotation than in Germany: as Germany is a consumer culture of abundance, such alternatives appear as desirable alternatives and sustainable lifestyles choices, while in Bulgaria they might appear as signs of poverty and exclusion from the yet unfolding market economy.

We came to understand that there are different challenges of the so called 'mental infrastructures': in Germany the consumer culture is so deeply rooted that there is space for some alternatives while never really challenging the given system. In Bulgaria there is a historical understanding of 'not being able to consume', which for many people still brings a very negative touch to all 'alternative projects' that might limit the access to goods and resources.



**Talk and compare to understand. Differences and similarities in history in present help us discover pathways and visions for a common future for sustainable development.**

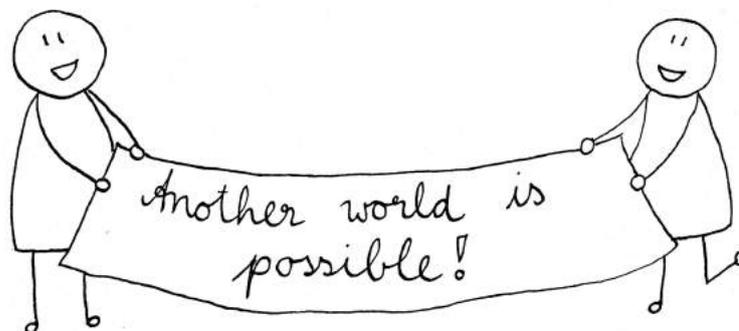
### 3. EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS BEING IN (INTER-) ACTION

The concept of Education for sustainable development has been a leading model for educational activities that deal with all kind of issues around environmental concerns. Our educational project and the methods of this tool-kit also refer to the concept and basic principles, especially the aspect of the development of competences.

While young people in Europe generally regard environmental friendly action as desirable and important, their day-to-day practise is most often not visibly inspired by their conviction. A gap between knowledge and action remains. Focussing on competences aims at closing this gap by not just passing *knowledge about*, but also skills on *how to act*. So when learning about problem we also should learn about ways to deal with it, about solutions, about activities to be taken, about discussions to be conducted.

From learning about basics we come to interacting with people that do things differently. We learn about what works well and how and what does not work out. We get inspired on what to do and what to do differently. Last but not least we also might take action on our own, learning by doing. This provides a manifold learning setting, like our experience when doing a public action showed. It triggered a discussion about how effective and acceptable forms of public political action are in our countries. It invites a discussion about forms of protest and communication.

Similarly when meeting with a representative of the German Ministry of Environmental Affairs: the whole session was experienced very differently by the German/Bulgarian participants. Many participants of the German group had a rather critical attitude towards the political efforts of the German environmental policies as not being strong enough to tackle the big problems and having a weak standing against the influences of corporate power. Meanwhile Bulgarian participants contrasted this view by sharing their experience of a almost not present environmental policy and a lack of official support for sustainable lifestyles.



## 4. MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

A central aspect is the understanding, that it's not just what we talk about and what we do, but also how we do it. This refers to an extended understanding of who our participants are:

### Everybody is an expert

In many of our methods we found an overwhelming response from our participants, they don't just know a lot of things on the topic, they have substantial ideas for a sustainable future and foremost, they are experts in education. This became especially clear when running the seminar planning at the end of our seminar. The amount of ideas was enormous and we realised a number of them for the second seminar. Overall it suggested or actually demanded a sound balance between solid impulses from experts, time for discussion, good practise examples, chances to do things one-self and time for rest and leisure – a rock-solid programme of best education practise.

The ideas included: a climate neutral seminar, being in nature (hiking, cycling), visiting alternatives in the country side (ecovillages), allowing lots of discussion, impulses by experts, do gardening, plant trees, living simply, cooking, slowing down, cultural aspects (improvisation theatre, music, dance, etc.), reduce water usage (use/construct compost toilets), aim at zero waste and plastic free, use the seminar for sharing & trading stuff: swap books, clothes, picnic in public, use more social media, classic media to become visible, make our message heard outside the seminar, join urban gardening, visit and support an ecocamp or ecovillage, nature excursions, run city tours and other good example excursions, include family activities – intergenerational activities, do simulation games to understand the system and structures better, live without money for a day at least.

### Everybody is a multiplier

One underlying understanding for our educational activities: we regard all participants as multipliers of the topics and methods, choosing a broader approach on the term of 'multiplication' of good practise. A multiplier or disseminator is in our regard not only a person that is professionally working with youth informally or giving workshops and classes. If a participant is inspired by a certain project or activity, he/she might later on engage in it herself and by this communicate with others about it and possibly inspire more people to get informed, involved, active. For example:

If Thomas takes his friends for a afternoon to a urban gardening instead of hanging out at a corporate-coffee place or taking part in a commercialised leisure time activity – *it is already a change.*

If Marcella is fascinated by the upcycling-session she might ask her grandmother to learn how to sew and make jam and so on and so forth...

.....  
...in this regard there is hundreds of possible ways to multiply and disseminate the ideas of any educational activity around the topic!  
.....

# LINKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



List of resources we found useful when preparing our project and our activities:

## PROJECTS ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND LIFESTYLES:

### Germany

- BINK (INFU/Uni Lüneburg): <http://www.konsumkultur.de/>  
Klimafrühstück (KATE Berlin): <http://www.kate-berlin.de/klimafruehstueck-de.html>  
Klimasparbuch (Oekom): <http://www.klimasparbuch.net/>  
KonsumKompass (DBU/UBA): <http://www.konsumkompass.com/>  
Nachhaltiger Warenkorb (RNE): <http://www.nachhaltiger-warenkorb.de/>  
Smergy (BUNDjugend): <http://www.be-smergy.de/>  
WELTbewusst (BUNDjugend): <http://www.weltbewusst.org/>

### International

- CleanEuro: <http://cleaneuro.at/>  
I shop Fair: <http://www.ishopfair.net/>  
Jugend begegnet Zukunft: <http://www.sherpa-bne.org/>  
Make chocolate Fair: <http://makechocolatefair.org/>  
Marine Littering: <http://www.marlisco.eu>  
Clean Clothes Campaign: <http://www.cleanclothes.org>  
Supply Change: <http://supplychange.org/>  
Share your meal: <https://www.shareyourmeal.net/>  
Freecycle: <https://www.freecycle.org/>  
Good Guide: <http://www.goodguide.com/>  
Various materials: <http://www.consumerclassroom.eu>

## RESOURCES LOOK AT FOR INTERNATIONAL YOUTH WORK ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION:

- Council of Europe (2008): Rethinking consumer behaviour for the well-being of all.  
[http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/Rethinking\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/Rethinking_en.pdf)
- European Commission (2012): Policies to encourage sustainable consumption:  
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/policies-to-encourage-sustainable-consumption-pbKH3112917/>
- UNEP (2009): Here and Now. Education for sustainable consumption.  
[http://www.unep.org/pdf/Here\\_and\\_Now\\_English.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/Here_and_Now_English.pdf)
- UNEP (2007): youthXchange towards sustainable lifestyles. Training kit on responsible consumption.  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001240/124085e.pdf>
- UNEP (2011): Visions for change. Recommendations for effective policies on sustainable lifestyles.  
<http://www.unep.org/pdf/WEBx0166xPA-VisionsForChangecountrypapers.pdf>
- UNESCO (2012): Education for sustainable Development Sourcebook.  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002163/216383e.pdf>

## RESOURCES ON FURTHER TOPICS LINKED TO SUSTAINABILITY...

### **Around the issue of planetary boundaries:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planetary\\_boundaries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planetary_boundaries)

[http://www.ted.com/talks/johan\\_rockstrom\\_let\\_the\\_environment\\_guide\\_our\\_development](http://www.ted.com/talks/johan_rockstrom_let_the_environment_guide_our_development)

### **The topic and movement of 'Degrowth':**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosperity\\_Without\\_Growth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosperity_Without_Growth)

<http://www.degrowth.org>

Book "The limits to growth", first edition, 1972: <http://www.donellameadows.org/wp-content/userfiles/Limits-to-Growth-digital-scan-version.pdf>

### **The ecological footprint:**

[http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/footprint\\_basics\\_overview/](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/footprint_basics_overview/)

Eureapa (consumption footprint): <https://www.eureapa.net/explore/>

### **A glimpse on sufficiency, minimalistic lifestyles, activism:**

<http://www.theminimalists.com/>

<http://inhabitat.com/>

<https://www.adbusters.org/>

### **How (and why) to start urban gardening, how to use eco-mapping:**

<http://opensourceecology.org/>

<http://about.greeni.us/5-unmissable-ted-talks-growing/>

*This is of course a very limited glimpse of the resources available, but we find it a good selection to start with.*

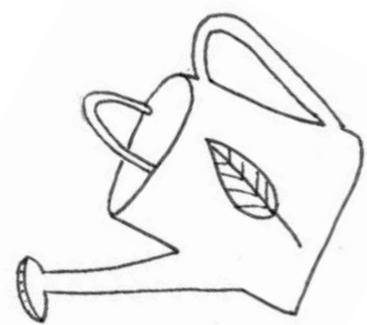


## SPACE FOR FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

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SO LET'S GET STARTED WITH SOWING AND NURTURING OUR OWN SEEDS!