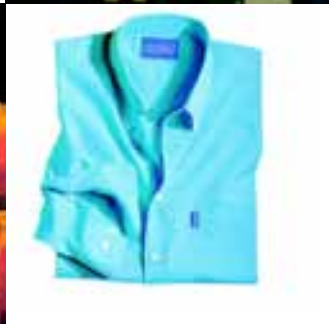




www.youthxchange.net - towards sustainable lifestyles

youthXchange

training kit on responsible consumption - THE GUIDE



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youthXchange

t o w a r d s s u s t a i n a b l e l i f e s t y l e s

THE GUIDE

t r a i n i n g k i t o n r e s p o n s i b l e c o n s u m p t i o n



United Nations
Educational,
Scientific
and Cultural
Organization



United
Nations
Environment
Programme

UNESCO and UNEP gratefully acknowledge the time and effort spent by those involved in producing and commenting on *The Guide* to YOUTHXCHANGE.

This publication was prepared by MÉTA (Media, Ecology and Technology Association), UNEP *Division of Technology, Industry and Economics* (DTIE) and UNESCO *Division for the Promotion of Quality Education* (ED/PEQ/ESD), in collaboration with Consumers International.

The MÉTA team on this project was: Patrizia Lugo Loprieno and Madhavi Bhatt (project concept, production and design), Peter Williams (project support). The work was coordinated by Isabella Marras, Associate Programme Officer at UNEP DTIE and Julia Heiss, Programme Specialist at UNESCO ED/PEQ/ESD. Christine Knights and Alina Tugend from Consumers International provided advice and editing assistance. Special thanks to Bas de Leeuw, UNEP-DTIE - Sustainable Consumption Programme Co-ordinator, for his support in the project.

Early drafts of the guide were submitted to those who initially encouraged UNEP and UNESCO to establish a source of information and education on sustainable consumption for young people: **the participants** at the UNEP/UNESCO *Expert Workshop on Youth, Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyles* (Paris, 6-7 November 2000).

Planet Earth is facing a severe global crisis. Economic and social development is putting an unbearable strain on our environment. Inefficient production and consumption patterns, together with uneven distribution, have widened the existing gap between **North** and **South**.

It has been estimated that if the rest of the world were to consume like the developed world, we would need the equivalent of **4 extra Earths**.

Young people today constitute an important group within our consumer societies, and the habit they develop **now** will play a decisive role in **future** consumption patterns. Their decisions as consumers exercise a growing influence on markets and **lifestyles**. Therefore, they deserve special attention in efforts to change our wasteful consumption patterns into ones that are more attuned to sustainable development.

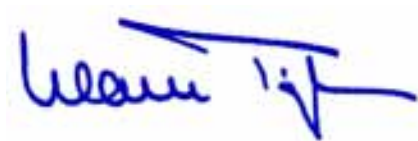
As the environmental conscience of the UN, the UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) underlines the importance of and the urgent need for a worldwide change in consumption and production patterns and attitudes.

For its part, the UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO) emphasises the role of education in shaping attitudes, values and behaviour, while developing the capacities, skills and commitment needed for building a sustainable future.

Through YOUTHXCHANGE, UNEP and UNESCO try to show young people that it is possible for all of us to translate our aspirations for a better world into everyday actions.

Klaus Töpfer
Executive Director UNEP

Koichiro Matsuura
Director-General UNESCO





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Introducing sustainable consumption

SC as we will refer to it.

This definition which is still widely accepted today originates from the Brundtland Report (Gro Harlem Brundtland et al., Our Common Future, WCED, New York-Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 43).

Sustainable Consumption is about finding workable **solutions** to imbalances – social and environmental – through more responsible behaviour from everyone. In particular, SC is linked to **production and distribution, use and disposal** of products and services and provides the means to rethink their lifecycle. The aim is to ensure that the basic needs of the entire global community are met, excess is reduced and environmental damage is avoided.

SC is an integral element of sustainable development and an issue of paramount importance to the United Nations:

“development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Providing **tools for change** is the responsibility of governments, regulatory institutions, NGOs and business. However, the role of the global consumer/citizen is essential in pushing these groups to take action more quickly and for the better.

This is why two United Nations agencies, **UNESCO** and **UNEP**, are joining forces to make **young people** aware of opportunities offered by more sustainable lifestyles and empower them to make a difference starting from their daily lives.

Any definition of SC highlights how consuming **less** is often a priority, but not always. Consuming **differently** and **efficiently** is the key challenge. In many cases, redistributing the chance to consume is what is needed.

UNEP-DTIE is discussing the meaning and implications of SC with experts in all regions of the world. Its SC-net, a forum of debate and information exchange is open to contributions from everyone and can be joined at: www.uneptie.org/sustain



Over 2 billion people in the world need more, just to survive:

"Many people in the world need to consume more just to survive. Many others may need to make more responsible choices. In the end, this will mean that fewer resources are needed and fewer emissions are generated, while still serving the needs and wishes of the world's population."

UNEP, Youth and Sustainable Consumption, Nairobi/Paris, October 1999.

One way of looking at it is **Factor 4** and **Factor 10** approach which argue that we should be able to live twice as well yet use half as much of our precious resources in the coming decades. We must also work towards a tenfold improvement in resource productivity in industrialised countries by 2050. Production and consumption patterns must become more efficient (by 4 then 10 times) if we want a lasting and more equal access to resources for everybody.

Ernst von Weisäcker, Amory B Lovins and L Hunter Lovins. Factor Four: Doubling Wealth, Halving resource use, Earthscan publications, UK 1998; www.factor10-institute.org

The concept of SC is complex and its definition is sometimes hard to pin down!
For more on this:

www.uneptie.org/sustain
www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/theme

Most definitions have the following common features:

- ▶ satisfying human needs;
- ▶ favouring a good quality of life through decent standards of living;
- ▶ sharing resources between rich and poor;
- ▶ acting with concern for future generations;
- ▶ looking at the 'cradle-to-grave' impact when consuming;
- ▶ minimising resource use, waste and pollution.

 **WWW...**
[youthxchange.net/
FAQs](http://youthxchange.net/FAQs)

Source: Teaching and Learning for a sustainable future – a multimedia professional development programme, UNESCO 2001.

The YXC project



IS THE FUTURE YOURS? In 2000, UNEP and UNESCO interviewed 10,000 young people (between 18-25). The aim was to open a dialogue with them about their:

- ▶ levels of **awareness** and interest in SC;
- ▶ degrees of **commitment** to sustainability;
- ▶ vision of the future and their **potential role** as leaders in the development of more responsible consumption patterns.

The survey revealed that young people were ambivalent in their consumption patterns. In particular, the respondents:

- ▶ report as major concerns for the future: environment, human rights and health;
- ▶ understand the impact of their use and disposal of products on the environment but not of their shopping behaviour.
- ▶ generally prefer individual to collective action to improve the world.

Given the findings, UNEP and UNESCO concluded that there is a need for reliable, clear and accessible information on the meaning and challenges of SC among young people.

Survey on line at: www.uneptie.org/youth_survey;
www.unesco.org/education/youth_survey

The world's population is expected to increase by **50%** by 2050 bringing the grand total of people on this planet to some **9 billion**. Nearly all growth is projected likely to take place in the developing world.

This will put **immense pressure** on our natural resources, biodiversity and the ecological balance of the planet we all call home. We need to change the way we view our resources and, more importantly, how we use them. Promoting sustainable consumption is more **urgent** now than ever.

Half the world's population is under **20 years old** and **90%** of all young people live in developing countries. Youth is a critical stakeholder in the global economy and will be the **main actor** and **motor** for change in the near future. Thus the energy, motivation and creativity of youth are essential assets to bringing about change.

This guide and the related website are intended as a **tool kit** to help trainers involve young people. It has been designed to assist youth groups, NGOs and teachers to help raise awareness of SC and empower youth to put **theory into practice**.

We should look at what and how we **produce** and **consume**. But in order to do so without too much cost, we - as consumers - need:

- ▶ clear **information**;
- ▶ accessible **sustainable products & services**;
- ▶ adequate **infrastructures**.

For this reason and to make SC more immediate to youth, this tool kit uses a broad and inclusive approach to the issue. For example, although healthy eating, the sex trade or media literacy are not always considered strictly related to SC, the kit views them as **significant factors** in developing consumer awareness. Using accessible **information**, concrete **examples** and everyday **language**, the kit provides many **facts & figures** on SC issues.

It highlights the **links** between cultural, geographical and inter-generational factors. In particular, YOUTHXCHANGE underlines how SC directly relates to quality of life, efficient use of resources (both human and natural), reduction of waste, ethical issues such as child labour, animal cruelty, fair trade and general equality.



The World's Youth 2000,
POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU:
www.prb.org

Over one-fourth of the world's six billion people - 1.7 billion people - are between the ages of 10 and 24, making this group the largest ever to enter adulthood. Eighty-six percent of 10-to-24-year-olds live in less developed countries. The proportion of youth in these countries is significantly higher than in more developed countries.

Population aged 10/24
(millions-% of total)

World in 2000	1,663	27
More developed	241	20
Less developed	1,423	29
Africa	256	33
Asia	1,031	28
North America	64	21
Latin America	155	30
Europe	149	21
Oceania	7	24

The target group is urban youth who have access to information media and have comparable consumption patterns. But anybody with **access to the Internet** can participate in this initiative.

www.youthxchange.net

Throughout the guide, you will find relevant links to specific pages of the YOUTHXCHANGE website. The last chapter provides a section by section description, highlighting the website's interactive nature as well as its teaching potential.

 WWW...

[youthxchange.net/
FAQs](http://www.youthxchange.net/FAQs)

Switching to sustainable lifestyles

"Consumers are increasingly interested in the 'world that lies behind' a product they buy. Apart from price and quality, they want to know how and where and by whom the product has been produced."

[Klaus Töpfer,
Executive Director UNEP]

Processes that strip the land of vital nutrients and make it infertile.

Moreover, every year we need one more hectare than the previous year.

What exactly does sustainability mean to US as individuals? What can we do to become more responsible? Do we all need to do the same thing? What should we do first, save the environment or eradicate poverty? What comes first, our health or the Earth's? Difficult questions never have easy answers - so the ancients say!

SC is an issue in a continuing state of evolution and the answers are rarely black and white. Nevertheless, there are a number of basic elements that make up the whole picture: what follows is an overview of the **topics and challenges**.

If we continue our current patterns of consumption, the future will not be bright. At the moment, estimates show that our planet is losing an area of fertile land about the **size of Ireland** every year as a result of overgrazing and deforestation. How long can this go on for?

The more we damage the environment, the more we put ourselves and future generations at risk. The planet's health is our health. Everyday 50 plant species become extinct. How many is that per week, per month, per year? Scientists believe that plants hold the key to finding cures for many diseases. So each **lost species** not only causes irreparable damage to the ecosystem, but is also a **lost opportunity** for our future development.

Figures from the **WORLD WILDLIFE FUND (WWF)** show that the average world citizen requires **2.3 hectares** (one hectare is equal to the size of a soccer field) to produce what he consumes every year and then to have a place to dump what's left over. That's **40% more than is sustainable**.



Putting priorities into perspective...

- ☞ **basic education** for all (\$6 billion) versus cosmetics in the U.S. (\$8 billion)
- ☞ **water and sanitation** for all (\$9 billion) versus ice cream in Europe (\$11 billion)
- ☞ **basic health and nutrition** (\$13 billion) versus pet foods in Europe and USA (\$17 billion)
- ☞ **reproductive health** for all women (\$12 billion) versus perfumes in Europe and the USA (\$12 billion)

Source: Human Development Report 1998, "Consumption for human development" [www.undp.org/hdro/1998/98]

So, are we all **equally responsible** then? No, not really. If you're European you need double this area, if you are American, it is 25 times more. And if you're Bangladeshi, it is one third. This also tells us that the distribution of consumption is seriously **out of balance**.

Quoted in Colors, Oct-Nov 2000, p. 19: www.benetton.com

The world's **20%** richest people consume nearly **75%** of the planet's natural resources. Think about it: the USA makes up 6% of the planet's population but consumes a staggering 30% of its resources.

The wealth of the world's **225 richest individuals** equals the annual income of the bottom 47% of the world's population, or **2.5 billion people**.

Talking about distribution, many people think that the planet is not producing enough to feed its population. **Wrong**. Unequal distribution of food is the main reason why there are **800 million** undernourished people in the world today.

Without considering the causes for this imbalance.

In cruel contrast, a British report published in 2000 revealed an estimated UK£400 million (about US\$571 million) worth of food ends up - **wasted!**- in landfills or incinerators every year. To add insult to injury, a recent US government study showed that more than a **quarter of all food** produced there doesn't get eaten.

"Scandal of the food Britain throws away", by John Vidal, The Guardian, 4 April 2000. And we have to take into account an additional cost of disposal of around £50 million a year.

To sum up, the facts underline that **SC** is not just an environmental issue but one that **promotes** a dignified standard of living for everyone.

Take care

"No issue is more compelling than the air we breathe, be it hot or cold, be it hawk or human."

[Jack Nicholson, actor]

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy.

Genetically Modified Organisms: there is an ongoing and heated debate on GMOs.

Concerned consumers should apply the precautionary principle. For further information: www.foodbiotech.org

The possible effects naturally have to be fully researched before any reliable information can be provided.

Co-opting out. The UK supermarket chain Co-op is banning the use of more than 20 common pesticides used in food production. The company said this was a result of consumer pressure following a survey it carried out. 70% of the 1,000 people interviewed said that they were worried about the use of pesticides (particularly the impact of chemical residues on health and the environment).

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/English/health/newsid_1417000/147663.stm

Health is wealth, so the old saying goes. People are increasingly opting for lifestyles that are more health-centred. Looking at your health should mean looking at the health of the planet too. Changes in lifestyle should benefit the planet as well as you.

Food is a key link between the two. Many people are choosing food products that are healthier, but produced in a way that does minimal damage to the environment and treats animals in a humane way. Moreover, people want the food they buy to be **safe** and not contain any nasty surprises.

A series of food-related crises - mad cow disease (BSE), foot and mouth, dioxins in chickens - have recently led to shoppers showing an active interest in more sustainable **certified options** (organic, free-range, GMO free).

Consumers are beginning to support shops that avoid **food wastage**. They are also demanding more information on what is found on the supermarket shelf - does this tin of tomatoes contain GMOs? Has the meat I want to buy been injected with hormones? It's all about **choice**: some people may not care if GMOs are present in food, but what is important is that sufficient information is provided so that people can choose for themselves.





Stepping-stones

Eat and drink as healthily as you can: more **fresh food** and fewer additives and less **processed food**.

- ☞ Avoid **GM** (genetically modified) foods (until their full impact is known) and intensively farmed meat.
- ☞ Avoid **non-seasonal** food, imported from **far away** countries.
- ☞ Let your supermarket know you want **labels** that inform you about the food you eat.
- ☞ Only take dietary **supplements** if you really feel you need them. Choose ones made from **natural ingredients** rather than chemical imitations.
- ☞ Learn about '**E numbers**' that artificially colour and flavour foods.

There is a campaign by the *SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT ALLIANCE* on taking care to watch 'food miles': www.sustainweb.org/foodmiles

In particular, steer clear of the E100 to 180 colourings, sulphur dioxide E220, the anti-oxidants E320 to 321 and monosodium glutamate E621. To find out more on E-numbers, take a look at: www.hacsg.org.uk/myweb/summary

Eating **organic food** or being **vegetarian** are choices people make about how they want to live, often because they want to be healthier. These choices are also good for the environment however. Eating chicken instead of beef means 15 times less environmental damage per serving. One person following a meat-free diet prevents more than 4,000 m² of trees being destroyed per year.





Chemicals: the dirty dozen comes to an end!

Talks to draw up an international legally binding treaty to phase out releases of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) were successful in May 2001.

Officials from some 120 governments confirmed that emissions of an initial 'dirty dozen' toxic chemicals including DDT, PCBs and dioxins should be eliminated.

The convention will enter into force once ratified by 50 countries.

Find out more on POPs and UNEP's role in campaigning for this convention on:
www.chem.unep.ch/pops/default



Not tested on animals.

14 The following websites provide further information:
www.pmac.net/pestenv;
www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/pesticides/index



Stepping-stones

There are small steps we can take to reduce our use of **chemicals**:

- ☞ Inform yourself about **cleaning products, toiletries and cosmetics**, what they contain, and what they do to you and the environment.
- ☞ Use **eco-friendly, cruelty-free** products whenever possible, and always use the minimum amount (in general a little bit less than recommended).
- ☞ Think carefully about how often you need to wash your **clothes**. Avoid **dry-cleaning** clothes, as the fluids used often contain highly polluting chemicals.
- ☞ If you must use **pesticides**, use the least harmful ones.
- ☞ When you visit your doctor, always ask whether the **remedy** being prescribed is the mildest that might work effectively.
- ☞ Sort out your medicine cabinet and take all the **medicines** which are out of date back to your chemist for disposal. Take usable ones you no longer need to pharmacies which collect them for people in need.

Taking care is also closely related to products we regularly use to clean and maintain our houses and ourselves. Many contain **chemicals** that add to already high pollution levels and are not biodegradable.

Dangerous chemicals are also in the air we breath. By 2005, for the first time in history, more people will live in **towns and cities** than in the countryside. Unfortunately, **air pollution** has become one of the defining features of city life. Poor air quality affects the health of the world's population in a frightening way – both in developed and developing countries.

Air pollution has led to a sharp increase in the number of people suffering from **asthma** and **allergies** in cities. In extreme cases asthma sufferers often have no choice but to stay indoors when smog levels are high.



"Casa verde casa" - how to keep your house free of chemicals - cover story on the Italian magazine LA NUOVA ECOLOGIA (April 1992, p. 18-31).

☺ Stepping-stones

We can all make an effort to clean up the **air**:

- ☞ If you have a choice, **walk** through a park rather than along a main road.
- ☞ **Stop** or cut down on smoking.
- ☞ Remember to exercise regularly; you can't store up **fitness** for your old age.



The impact of air pollution on city dwellers' health is shocking: it triggers 1 in 50 heart attacks in London...

In India's main cities, Delhi and Bombay, breathing the air is the equivalent of smoking 10-20 cigarettes a day and in Delhi alone 7,500 people die every year of respiratory illnesses.

15

 WWW...

youthxchange.net
/respecting-our-bodies

Getting around

"It is transport that will make or break the sustainability of a city."

[Richard Rogers, architect]



Traffic in Taipei, TOMORROW magazine, n. 2-1991.

The average length of journeys has also increased (quadrupled per capita!): www.wbcscdmobility.org

According to "Standard's and Poor's DRI", World Car Industry Forecast Report (London 2000), Brazil, China and India will increase their passenger car production by 78%, from 2,6 million in 2000 to 4,6 million in 2005.

Mobility has always been a key feature and an area of constant change and improvement in human activity. Travelling through the centuries we have seen modes of transport multiply, grow in size and power, and of course speed up. But progress has come at a price.

According to World Bank figures, in 2010 there will be 816 million motor vehicles worldwide (compared to 580 million in 1990). Moving from projections to real figures, in 2000 global passenger car production set a new record of 40.9 million vehicles, rising by 4% (compared to the previous year). If we carry on producing at the same rate we will most likely reach the 2010 projections a little earlier than expected!

BUR is a project organised by Carbusters, a Czech youth NGO based in Prague. [www.carbusters.ecn.cz]

Balkan Unity Ride (BUR) is a 5-week project for anyone interested in environmentalism, culture, nature, community life, cycling, sustainability. It started at the end of July 2001 in Stanciova, a minority Serbian village in Romania and has spread to Serbia and Bulgaria. BUR focused on 3 issues: campaigning for sustainable transport and car free cities; acting as a support group for local organisations and individuals; forming a Balkan network of grassroots groups and individuals willing to work together on a variety of issues. The participants promoted sustainable transport to as many people as possible, with street actions, public displays, demonstrations and discussions together with local NGOs involved in this issue.

80% of the world's cars are owned by about 20% of the global population, mainly in the richer countries. There are more cars in just one US urban area - greater Los Angeles - than in the whole of India, China, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh put together.

Caroline Clayton, *Dirty Planet: the Friends of the Earth Guide to pollution and what you can do about it*, *Livewire Books, London 2000, p. 17.*

Further problems: emissions of carbon monoxide are polluting cities to critical levels and roads are severely congested by the volume of traffic. Drivers in Bangkok are estimated to spend an average of **44 days** a year stuck in traffic. Carbon **emissions** from US cars and light trucks totalled **291 million tonnes** in 1997 and exceeded the total emissions from all but a few countries worldwide. In addition, the supply of traditionally used fuels - i.e. gasoline - is not inexhaustible.

See also the EUROPEAN LOCAL TRANSPORT INFORMATION SERVICE - an interactive guide to current EU transport policies: www.eltis.org

U.S General Accounting Office, *Washington 2000.*

www.igc.org/wri/climate/jm_oil_001

Car dependency has made us all **lazy**. Almost **1 in 3 journeys under 5 miles** (8km) in big cities are made by car. Of course, motor vehicles are also essential to modern living. But more **responsible use** can bring further improvements, making cities cleaner, healthier and safer to live in. Short journeys add to pollution levels: a **5km** (about 3-mile) car journey made by car emits **10** times more carbon dioxide per passenger than a bus and **25** times more than a train.

Ibid Clayton, op. cit. p. 16. These are precisely the conditions in which the use of vehicles is less efficient.



Stepping-stones

Congestion, polluted air, noise... our cities are becoming more and more uninhabitable. What can we do?

- ☞ **Walk, cycle or roller-blade.** Bicycles are the most energy-efficient means of transportation - 80% of the rider's energy is transformed into motion. It's fast and it will get you fit!
- ☞ **Car share/car pool** whenever you can. Car sharing enables several people to use one car, a car pool puts one or more car at the disposal of a group of people who organise themselves to share the car. Both alternatives reduce road traffic, save petrol and cut pollution levels, energy use per passenger and car disposal costs.
- ☞ Alternatively, if you only need a car periodically, **hire** it.
- ☞ **Public Transport.** Trains and buses are generally the greener options as they carry more people and pollute less and use less energy per passenger.
- ☞ Buy '**green**' motor vehicles and **maintain** them well. Before you buy, check on your car, scooter, or bike's energy efficiency, pollution performance, ability to take unleaded petrol and life expectancy.
- ☞ **Drive carefully.** Avoid sudden acceleration and braking. Aggressive driving leads to considerably higher fuel consumption and more pollution. Switch motor off if waiting longer than 30 seconds. Do not wait too long before changing gears.



Getting away

"There are no passengers on spaceship earth. We are all crew."

[Marshall McLuhan, sociologist]

More information on the issue:
www.ecotourism.org;
www.sustravel.org;
www.greenglobe21.com;
www.green-travel.org;
www.responsibletravel.com



Mobility means more than just getting around. It also means getting away, travelling, be it for **study, work or pleasure**. But are some choices more sustainable than others? Here's some food for thought...

Tourism has a huge impact on our planet and is the world's largest industry. According to the World Tourism Organisation, global international arrivals will reach almost 1 billion by 2010 (500 million in 1993).

Mass tourism causes serious environmental damage. Scientists predict that by 2015, half of the annual destruction of the ozone layer will be caused by **air travel**. Not all **air travel** can be attributed to tourists, of course, but they do contribute substantially to the problem.

Air pollution, soil and water degradation are particularly problematic in coastal areas, being often over-exploited. And more visibly, what about the **irresponsible tourist** who transform pieces of paradise on earth into rubbish dumps?!

Accounting for over 10% of world economic activity and providing direct or indirect employment to over 200 million people. For further details see:
www.unep.org/pc/tourism/sust-tourism
www.world-tourism.org
www.wttc.org

The September 11th tragedy in the USA has led to a sudden downturn in the number of air passengers. But the subsequent approval given to expand London Heathrow suggests this will be a blip in the upward trend.

Are there alternatives? Yes. Nowadays, an increasing number of **sustainable holiday** and travel options are available (conservation and restoration projects, voluntary aid projects, teaching abroad, etc.). Check on the Net: you'll find hundreds of ideas and options, but be careful as some sites promote packages that are not as sustainable as they claim!

Looking for something more relaxing? No problem. Sustainability can also feature in conventional holiday choices. Carefully managed, locally run hotels, bed & breakfasts and camping sites are more likely to boost and respect the **local** economy, environment and culture than some **international** hotel chains.

A positive sign is that sustainable or ethical tourism is gaining popularity. Above are **some pointers** on holidays. The list may seem long but when travelling our efforts and attention need doubling. Not only are you going to a place where the culture is often unfamiliar to you, but you are going to somebody else's home and everybody appreciates a well behaved and considerate **guest**.

UNEP Tour Operators Initiative (TOI)

Implementing a more sustainable transport policy is one of the core elements of STUDIOUS' (Germany) efforts towards sustainable development. Among the measures adopted are incentives to offer train or bus transport in place of air and car travel.

Is it possible to combine your enjoyment of travelling with sustainability? At PREMIER TOURS (Southern Africa) they say yes: the agency designs tours including sites and accommodation which actively contribute to the preservation of the holiday destinations.

www.toinitiative.org/good_practices



Stepping-stones

There are several things we can do to reduce our impact as tourists, for example...

- ☞ Choose travel options which produce the greatest benefit for the host population. Bargaining for lower prices when purchasing tickets and souvenirs may mean exploitation.
- ☞ Save precious natural resources. Don't waste water and energy. Avoid using pollutants such as detergents in streams or springs.
- ☞ Remove litter. Burn or bury paper and separate all non-degradable litter.
- ☞ Plants should be left to flourish in their natural environment. Taking cuttings, seeds and roots is illegal in many parts of the world.
- ☞ Support local trade and crafts-people. Buy locally made souvenirs where possible.
- ☞ Respect land rights. When on tribal lands, tourists should behave as they would on private property.
- ☞ Try and read about the country you are visiting - it will help you to respect the local culture and open doors for you. In many countries, loose and lightweight clothes are preferable to revealing ones. Similarly, kissing in public is often culturally inappropriate.

So... as the AMERICAN SIERRA CLUB recommends: take only photographs; leave only footprints!

"Coral or no coral? It's my choice": coral reefs

are major attraction in many coastal areas. UNEP provides information on how to visit these wonders and respect their environment:

www.uneptie.org/tourism

Sources: TOURISM CONCERN'S (UK); SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL'S CODE; THE HIMALAYAN TOURIST CODE (Nepal); ECUMENICAL COALITION OF THE THIRD WORLD TOURISM (Bangkok); TOURISM WITH INSIGHT (D); www.sierraclub.org



WWW...

youthxchange.net
/looking-for-a-place



Reduce Waste

"Every product we consume has a similar hidden story, unwritten inventory of its materials, resources, and impacts. It also has attendant waste generated by its use and disposition."

[Paul Hawken, environmental expert]

In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in **waste production**. On average, every person living in a developed country throws away **1kg** of rubbish every day.

This average does not mean equal distribution in waste production/disposal. Europeans, for example, each year generate around **2,000 million tonnes** of waste. Over **40 million tonnes** of this is classified as **hazardous**. Over the last six years, the amount of waste generated has grown by **10%** a year.

It is clear that we must **stop** and reverse this trend if we want to avoid being overwhelmed by **rubbish**. We have to find long-term ways of preventing waste for two basic, yet crucial, reasons:

- ▶ the **more** waste, the **more** potential pollution;
- ▶ garbage is **full** of materials that can be reused and recycled - less waste, more money!

Nearly 113 billion cups, 39 billion eating utensils and 29 billion plates are used and discarded in the USA every year - and half of them are made of **plastic**. India generates a total of 4.5 million tonnes of plastic waste. The offending substance is usually polyethylene (what plastic bags are made of) and takes up to **100 years** to decompose.



Pushing plastic out. *The citizens of New Delhi have one of the highest consumption rates of plastic bags in the world. Together with the Indian army, the PANCHAVATI GREEN MOVEMENT has started a campaign -The Quit India Polybag - to cut down on the use of plastic bags. Students talk to vendors and traders in local neighbourhoods, informing them of the impact of plastic bags on the environment. Families are encouraged to reuse plastic bags, or better still, to switch to cloth bags.*

Due to Panchavati's efforts, all Army canteens in New Delhi have stopped using plastic bags. In addition to this, the hotel industry in New Delhi has also banned the use of plastic bags on their premises. The New Delhi Municipal Corporation has also joined Panchavati and is committed to making New Delhi a plastic bag free zone.

Source: www.unep.org/children_youth/ysc/handbook

Even **computers**, generally considered as tools that can contribute to SC, are generating harmful waste. Given that computers double in power every 18 months, by 2005, there will be **315 million** obsolete computers in the world. According to the US-based SILICON VALLEY TOXIC COALITION, that's the equivalent of 600 million kg of lead, 1 million kg of cadmium, and 200,000 kg of mercury - all toxic metals.

www.svtc.org

How can we rethink waste? First, use less! Second, consider the product's design. Redesigning products to minimise or even prevent creating waste must also be part of the solution. To further explore the complex issue of ecodesign, try visiting these and other sites.

www.o2.org;
www.smartarch.nl/;
www.cfd.rmit.edu.au/dfe/cfd_2_5

To check out examples of sustainably-designed products, take a look at UNEP's webpage on sustainable design: www.unep.org/pc/sustain/design/design

What is ecodesign?

It is designing products using a 'circular approach' - which is known as 'cradle-to-grave' - taking into account their entire lifecycle from creation through use to disposal. The aims are to:

- ▶ Utilise materials, energy and other resources more efficiently.
- ▶ Choose materials that don't come from endangered ecosystems.
- ▶ Design to prevent pollution and waste.
- ▶ Select recycled/recyclable materials and energy saving technologies.
- ▶ Optimise a product's life: make it easy to use, maintain, update, reuse, recycle or re-manufacture.
- ▶ Keep it simple! - Use fewer materials/components and allow easy disassembly and recycling.
- ▶ Improve transport logistics.
- ▶ Avoid potential health risks. - Use safe, non toxic materials.
- ▶ Respect human rights (avoid sweatshops and child labour).

Often, ecodesign is not about reinventing goods. It recognises that people do not always want a product they need solutions. If designed well, a laundrette could easily replace individual washing machines.

Ecodesign looks for alternative ways of performing a task with lower ecological impact and equal (or greater) efficiency.

Ecodesigners believe that ethics and aesthetics are not opposites but rather complement each other.



One of the most important challenges facing the world is reducing **resource consumption**. In other words, we must stop thinking of the earth's natural resources – be they fossil fuels, water, natural gases or trees - as a never ending supply. This is where recycling plays a crucial role.

If we do not want to exhaust our supply of natural resources, **repairing, reusing and recycling** need to become second nature to us in commercial and daily life. This will help to:

- ▶ **minimise** and **prevent** further environmental damage;
- ▶ **avoid** unnecessary use of our natural resources;
- ▶ **conserve** energy and **bring down** pollution levels.

*The Kiunga Marine Reserve in northern **Kenya** has no reef protection. The trash washed up on the beach pollutes but also threatens turtle nesting. KIUNGA ECO-FRIENDLY HANDICRAFTS collects the trash and turn them into toys. Old flip-flops are transformed into toy cell phones and cars.*

Such as deforestation and the extraction of virgin raw materials from the earth.

Recycling can also play a major role in reducing solid waste by using it to manufacturing new products. For every **ton of paper** recycled, **17 trees** and **21.000 litres of water** are saved. In addition, air pollution is reduced by 30kg and landfill waste by 2.3m³.

To find out more, take a look at: www.wastewatch.org.uk; www.recycle.net - And for a glossary on recycled/recyclable materials: www.grn.com/grn/library/gloss

Reusing and reducing **packaging** are key tools to prevent packaging waste. In the USA, for example, 64 million tonnes of packaging are thrown away every year. But some companies are changing their approach towards wasteful packaging.

PHILIPS DESIGN, for example, created a global design programme for over 80,000 products that made up the PHILIPS CONSUMER ELECTRONICS portfolio. www.design.philips.com/portfolio/casestudies/pacman



Stepping-stones

These are simple ways to reduce the amount of waste we produce in our everyday lives. Remember the 5 R's of recycling:

- ☞ **Refuse** unnecessary packaging and encourage manufacturers to stop over-packaging their products.
- ☞ **Return** bottles and refillable containers whenever you can; buy returnable bottles if possible.
- ☞ **Reuse** and refill as much as you can. Items such as envelopes, bottles and plastic bags can all be reused. Take unwanted clothes to a charity shop - not only are you recycling but someone else will appreciate and benefit from them.
- ☞ **Repair** things rather than throw them away.
- ☞ **Recycle** paper, cans and bottles by taking them to your local recycling centre. Compost household waste.



 [www...
youthxchange.net
/facts&figures](http://www.youthxchange.net/facts&figures)

www.atimes.com/china

White garbage. People in China's cities can barely go a day without using a wide range of disposables: plastic cups, containers, combs, toothbrushes, ballpens and chopsticks. China is turning into the world's largest market for disposables. Every year, it uses billions of disposables. The piling up of 'white garbage' has led to a major campaign in the media and on the streets to make Chinese consumers change their throw-away mentality. Many cities have imposed local restrictions against plastic packaging. Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province, is the first Chinese city to ban plastic packaging. People are encouraged to use wicker and straw baskets, cloth bags on shopping trips, and other eco-friendly containers made from paperboard, rice husk, straw or starch.

Plastic: recycling labels



With a little bit of care most plastic can be recycled, and the collection of plastics for recycling is rapidly increasing. Plastic recycling faces one huge problem: plastic types must not be mixed for recycling, yet it is impossible to tell one type from another by sight or touch. Even a small amount of the wrong type of plastic can ruin the melt.

The plastics industry has responded to this problem by developing a series of colour-coded markers, commonly seen on the bottom of plastic containers.

Types 1 and 2 are commonly recycled. Type 4 is less commonly recycled. The other types are generally not recycled, except perhaps in small test programmes.

Look for the **recycling logo**. As a shopper you can use your spending power to make a difference. Take care: some products' labels just indicate that part of their contents (see %) are **recycled** and others inform you that a product's components are easily **recyclable**.

For the eco-wise consumer, looking for products made of recycled goods has become a part of every day shopping. For example, you can find a range of items - including clothing, furniture and toys - all made from recycled paper.





Optimise energies

"It is up to us as individuals to do what we can, however little that may be. Just because switching off the light on leaving the room seems inconsequential, it does not mean that we should not do it."

[the 14th Dalai Lama, religious leader]

For centuries humankind has used the earth's resources as if there were no tomorrow. Global energy use has risen by almost **70%** during the **last 30 years**. What's more, energy use is predicted to increase by 2% every year for the next 15 years.

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE:
www.wri.org/wri/trends/index

The amount of oil consumed worldwide in a single year took nature a million years to create. It is estimated that **oil reserves** could run out in 60 years. Our traditional energy sources - coal and oil - are fossil fuels. They get their name from the fact that they were formed over millions of years from the fossilised remains of dead animals and plants.

Ibid. Clayton, op. cit., p. 97.
www.fuelcellpark.com

Smart Life. *The ENERGY CONSERVATION CENTRE OF JAPAN has launched Smart Life, a campaign to support a new energy conserving lifestyle. The idea is to promote and educate the public using mass media outlets like newspapers, TV and radio and public relations tools such as posters, leaflets, and video.*

In summer and winter when energy consumption is high, ECCJ carries out energy-saving campaigns in major cities around Japan. In the area of clothing, ECCJ holds Smart Collection exhibitions in Tokyo and Osaka to encourage low-energy fashion. The organisation also conducts surveys - for example one on eating habits was a launching point to promote ideas for energy saving in cookware, food production and distribution. ECCJ also looked at office automation appliances to support the reduction of standby electricity consumption.

ECCJ publishes the survey results in posters, brochures, and magazine advertisements, and on its home page on the worldwide web: www.eccj.or.jp



GreenLight was launched in February 2000. It is a voluntary programme in which private

and public organisations make a commitment to the EUROPEAN COMMISSION to upgrade their existing lighting and design new installations. The objectives of GreenLight are:

- ▶ reducing - throughout Europe - the energy consumed by lighting;
- ▶ minimising pollution and global warming;
- ▶ improving the quality of working conditions...
- ▶ while, at the same time, saving money!

For further information:
www.eu-greenlight.org



The **OVERUSE** of these fuels has led to high levels of pollution (burning fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere which creates the conditions for global warming - see the following chapter - and acid rain). We have to reduce our dependence on the earth's exhaustible natural resources. We need **alternative, renewable energy sources NOW**.

Unfortunately wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, hydroelectric power are still not widely used. Why? Governments' energy policies favour traditional energy sources. There is a lack of capital investment, research funding and awareness campaigns on alternative sources. Nonetheless, this will hopefully change in the near future as these **cleaner energy technologies** expand and become more efficient.

Find out more at:
<http://rredc.nrel.gov/tidbits/>;
www.solar-dome.com/;
www.solarnow.org/glossary/;
<http://solstice.crest.org/sustainable/index/>; www.eren.doe.gov/

A new energy 'juice'. In its first endorsement of a commercial enterprise, GREENPEACE has joined up with NPOWER to launch Juice, a new green UK electricity initiative that for the first time costs exactly the same as ordinary electricity. Juice bases its energy supplies on wind power. Not only is it affordable, but the more subscribers sign up, the more new wind power stations will be built. Until then, subscribers will get green supplies from existing renewable sources. Once more than 50,000 sign up, another site will be developed and so on. For further information: www.npower.com/juice

A youth group in Peru, SAYWITE, has embarked on a project to provide renewable energy to health centres in rural villages by distributing solar panels. The group arranges the installation of the panels but also organises workshops to train local and university students to monitor the project, as well as help service the panels and hold environmental workshops. Saywite is also involved with other projects and campaigns. They are building a wind power generator to prove that there are viable local sources of non-fuel power. They are also setting up bicycle sharing stations to discourage car use.





Energy is **essential** for almost all our activities, including cooking our food, heating our houses or providing power for our industries. However, the planet's energy use, generation and waste has its consequences. After cars, power is the biggest **source of pollution** on earth.

Energy saving is a big issue that calls for both global and individual solutions. There are many things we can do every day to cut down on the energy we use. Remember that saving energy can save you money!

Space and water heating together account for **75%** of a household's **fuel bill**. Rising energy costs should make us increasingly energy aware.



Energy Star was introduced by the US

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY in 1992 as a voluntary labelling programme designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products, in order to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Energy Star has expanded to cover new homes, most of the buildings sector, residential heating and cooling equipment, major appliances, office equipment, lighting, consumer electronics, and much more. The Energy Star was recently adopted by the European Commission, making it a global energy efficiency label.

For further information: www.energystar.gov



Stepping-stones

Here are some examples of how to save energy in the home:

- ☞ Turn it off! A **TV set** on standby can still use 1/4 of the energy it uses when it's on.
- ☞ Buy energy-efficient, compact fluorescent **light-bulbs**. Switch off **lights** in empty rooms.
- ☞ Turn down the **thermostat** by a few degrees. If you **feel cold** put on another layer instead of turning up the central heating.
- ☞ Don't use more hot water than you need – take **showers** or share baths.
- ☞ Connect **appliances** to the mains whenever possible. Discarded batteries are highly polluting. If you need to use batteries, make sure they are rechargeable ones.
- ☞ Draught-proof **doors** and **windows**.
- ☞ Make sure old household appliances are replaced by **energy efficient** ones.



Forecast the weather

"Those who still claim that global warming is not caused by the greenhouse effect through human activities are a bit like people still believing that the earth is flat."

[Gerhard Berz,
scientist]



Greenhouse gases are so called because they make an insulating layer around the earth, like the glass in a greenhouse, which traps in the heat of the sun's rays. Find out more on: www.ipcc.ch (INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE – WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANISATION and UNEP); www.unfccc.de; www.grida.no/climate/; www.globalchange.org; www.greenpeace.org/~climate; www.cool-companies.org

The damage to the earth's atmosphere and climate seems such a massive problem that our initial reaction is to ask: what difference can one person make? But change is needed urgently. **Global warming** and **ozone depletion** are two different problems. They are linked because they both relate to the quality of our atmosphere and have direct impact on our health and on the health of our entire planet. If nothing is done, the consequences for the Earth will be disastrous.

Global warming. Over the last 100 years, average global temperatures have increased by around $\frac{1}{2}$ C°. Scientists believe the planet is getting warmer because humans, with their millions of factories and cars, are pumping more '**greenhouse gases**' - carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases - into the atmosphere than ever before.

The INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC) has estimated that global average surface temperatures will rise up to 5.8°C by the end of this century if **no action** is taken. This temperature increase could trigger serious consequences for humanity and other life forms alike, including a rise in sea levels of an estimated 90 cm over the period that could flood coastal areas and small islands, and greater frequency and severity of extreme weather events. The **Kyoto Protocol** is the industrialised countries' commitment (except US) to reduce CO₂ emissions by 5% (compared to 1990 level) by 2012.



For further information on the Kyoto Protocol: www.unfccc.int/resource/juickit/fact21

However this reduction is only the first step. We could reverse the damage caused by climate change provided that we make the necessary **efforts to modify** the way we currently consume and produce. Experts say that global cuts in CO₂ emissions of around **60%** will be necessary by **2050** if catastrophic climate change is to be avoided.

According to the UN IPCC. Making this kind of immediate reduction in CO₂ (carbon dioxide) emissions is impossible but it indicates the kind of pollution cut that's needed to put the brake on global warming.

The hole in the ozone layer. Ozone is a gas that is poisonous at ground level. But 25km above the ground, a fine layer of ozone surrounds the planet and protects us from the sun's rays. This layer is crucial to life on earth. It soaks up almost all of the sun's damaging ultraviolet (UV) light, which causes **skin cancers** and **eye diseases**, and harms plants and animals. **Ozone-depleting** gases remain active and harmful in the stratosphere for up to 111 years.

These substances were first used as the working fluid in fridges and later in air-conditioning units. Other major uses of CFCs include the spraying power in aerosols. For more information: UNEP DTIE ENERGY AND OZONACTION UNIT - Email: ozonaction@unep.fr; www.unep.tie.org/ozonaction

In 1985, scientists found a hole in the ozone layer. This hole lies above **Antarctica** and is growing all the time. So far, about **10%** of the earth's ozone shield has been destroyed. **CFCS** are responsible for destroying much of the 'missing' ozone layer.

Developed countries have agreed to curb the use of ozone-destroying chemicals, either by banning them or phasing them out. In developing countries, however, their use will be allowed until the year 2010.



Checking Climate Change. *Global warming isn't going to go away on its own. Making increasingly better use of resources in manufacturing processes and creating better-performing products with ever-lower energy demands has to become part of normal business practice if we are to crack this problem. Business has a vital role in bringing to market and promoting technologies that reduce carbon dioxide emissions.*

*Nine business leaders from Europe and the USA have established a network of companies, called the **Respect Table**, committed to meeting the challenges of the Kyoto Protocol. The network has placed the question of climate change at the top of its agenda, collaborating to create a socially, ecologically and economically sustainable society. The companies participating include **IKEA (Sweden), INTERFACE (US), NUON RENEWABLE ENERGY (The Netherlands), THE BODY SHOP INT (UK).** [www.respecteurope.com]*

*The **Pew Center on Global Climate Change** is a non-profit-making, apolitical and independent organisation dedicated to providing credible information, straight answers and innovative solutions in the effort to address global climate change. Thirty-two major companies, with mostly included in the Fortune 500, are working together through the Center to educate the public on the risks, challenges and solutions to climate change. [www.pewclimate.org]*



If you want to know more about these complex issues, start by surfing on: www.safeclimate.net
www.climatevoice.org;
www.iisd.org/youth/internetcafe

And the fact that we are used to them and our technologies are based on them.

For example, NIKE is one of four companies to join WWF's CLIMATE SAVERS PROGRAM - a voluntary initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. See: www.nikebiz.com;
www.panda.org/climate/savers

It's never too late to take action. The ozone layer will recover if we all use less ozone destroying substances. However, if these were all banned tomorrow, it would take **40 years** for the ozone layer to heal.




For a long time the apparent availability of fossil fuels has not really pushed us to consider alternative and cleaner options. As a result we are still **heavily dependent** on traditional energy sources and are experiencing the consequences of it on our health and on the planet. We must invest more time, money and 'human energy' to make renewable energy sources a viable **alternative** to fossil fuels. Responsible consumers have a key role: through our positive actions, the 'sustainability-fan-club' will grow! Powerful multinationals will also have a hard time maintaining their success if they ignore your concerns.

The WORLD BUSINESS COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT explores the links between climate change, business and other stakeholders on: www.wbcsd.org/projects/pr_climenergy



Stepping-stones

Doing my bit to control climate change and ozone depletion:

-  **Stop** using **aerosols (sprays)**. Although they no longer contain CFCs, they do contain other polluting chemicals and can't be recycled.
-  Ensure that any new **fridge** contains reduced levels of CFCs or even better, none. Don't just dump your old fridge. Call the manufacturer and ask them to remove the old CFCs from it. These can (and should) be recycled!
-  Cut down on **car/motor vehicle use**. Cars are the single biggest source of excess CO2 and produce other greenhouse gases.



We drink it, we wash ourselves, our dishes, our clothes, our homes and our cars in it. The human body is largely made up of water. Food crops won't grow without it, in fact it is **vital** to the **survival** of all living organisms. You can do without food for about **1 month**, but only **5-7 days** without water.

97% of the earth's water is ocean water, unusable to man. Less than **1%** of the world's water is available for drinking and other purposes, including agriculture and industry. This supply comes from rivers, dams and ground-water sources.

Across the world, water consumption is on the increase. The availability of something as basic and fundamental as water is likely to become one of the **most urgent** and **destabilising** resource issues in years to come.

Based on the present increase in demand, the economically exploitable water should **run out** in some critical areas by the year **2005**. And by the year **2025**, two-thirds of the world's population could be facing serious water shortages.

A huge proportion of the earth's population - **2 billion** people - have **no access** to safe drinking water. Over **4 billion** people worldwide have no running water at home. In some parts of Africa, women and children carry up to **20 litres** of water, often for over **5 hours**, from their nearest water supplies. While in industrialised countries, the average urban home of 4.6 people use **640 litres** of water per day.

Save water, safe water

"Many of the wars in this century were about oil, but those of the next century will be over water."

[Ismail Seragelgin,
World Bank, 1995]

These statistics are shocking enough, and there is every possibility that we will have a disaster of unprecedented proportions on our hands unless water conservation and management are taken seriously.

www.panda.org/livingwaters/initiatives/wetlands

In the sixties, the flow of water into the Sea began to drop alarmingly. Upstream irrigation schemes, for the growing of rice and cotton, consumed more than 90% of the natural flow of water from the Central Asian Tian Shan mountains. As a result the Sea's surface area declined. For more information: <http://nailaokda.8m.com/ara1>

Recent studies draw attention to the economic value of freshwater ecosystems such as **wetlands**, lakes and rivers. Despite their importance, freshwater ecosystems are seriously threatened worldwide. In just 30 years, the **Aral Sea** - formerly the fourth largest lake in the world - has shrunk to less than half its original size, and become as salty as the ocean.






The developed world regularly pollutes water supplies, rivers and seas, putting the ecological balance in peril. Every day people are pumping **pollution** into different stages of the water cycle: from dumping sewage into the sea to pouring dangerous chemicals into our rivers...

Water **quality** is as important as **quantity**. Recently, more than 43 different pesticides were found to be at illegally high levels in the UK's drinking water. The list of water pollutants is long: herbicides, nitrates, phosphates, lead, oil and various industrial chemicals.



Stepping-stones

If we make efforts to change the way we use water, we can make a difference. The less water rivers contain, the more concentrated pollution becomes. What can we do to save water?

-  Have a **shower**, not a bath. On average, a bath uses twice as much water as a shower.
-  When replacing **toilets** and **washing machines**, ask for models with low water-use.
-  Wash **clothes** less often. Sometimes clothes are not really dirty, they just need airing or freshening up. Your clothes will last longer too.
-  Don't flush but throw away your **tampons**, **sanitary towels**, **nappies (diapers)** and **condoms**, especially if you live in an area where sewage is pumped untreated into the sea. Think about that next time you go for a swim.
-  Never pour **household chemicals** (such as oil, turpentine and paint remover) down the drain.



Bottled water: the real cost. In the light of a new, independent study, the WWF is urging people to drink tap water, which is often as good as bottled water. This would be good for the environment and for consumers' wallets.

According to the study, bottled water may be no safer, or healthier than tap water in many countries, while selling for up to 1000 times the price. Yet, it is the fastest growing drinks industry in the world and is estimated to be worth US\$22 billion annually.

The UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO) says that in terms of nutritional value, bottled water is no better than tap water. It may contain small amounts of minerals but so does tap water from many public municipal water supplies.

The study also finds that every year 1.5 million tons of plastic are used to bottle water. Toxic chemicals can be released into the environment during the manufacture and disposal of the bottles. Furthermore, a quarter of the 89 billion litres of water bottled worldwide annually are consumed outside their country of origin. Emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide, caused by transporting bottled water within and between countries, contribute to the global problem of climate change (3 May 2001).

For further information: WWF LIVING WATERS CAMPAIGN, e-mail: lhadeed@wwfint.org.

Thirsty for knowledge on water?
Visit UNESCO's WATER PORTAL on www.unesco.org/water or other relevant sites such as: www.thewaterpage.com www.gpa.unep.org



An average golf course in a tropical country such as **Thailand** needs 1,500kg of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides per year and uses as much water as 60,000 rural villagers.



Purchase without pain

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

[Martin Luther King, civil rights leader]

www.ilo.org

Not buying anything is unrealistic, but stopping excess buying is essential. SC is not just about the environmental cost of the way we produce and consume; human and social costs must be considered too.

Countless items that end up in the shops and in our homes, are produced in the developing world because multinationals find that labour is often much cheaper there. But the deal has to be fair to everyone involved. SC has to uphold social justice and respect basic human, social and economic rights, which should be available to everyone and exclusive to no one.

Child labour is a clear example of why SC makes it necessary to look at the conditions and the basic rights of the people involved in producing and manufacturing goods. According to estimates by the INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO), about 250 million children, aged between 5-14 years old, are engaged in economic activity in developing countries.

ILO statistics indicate that 2 in 5 children in Africa (32% of the world total -

Cleaning carpets. RUGMARK is a non-profit-making organisation that works to end child labour and offer educational opportunities to children in Nepal, India and Pakistan. The RUGMARK label means that the carpet or rug on sale was not produced using illegal child labour. According to a recent corporate press release [January 2001], more than 2 million carpets carrying the RUGMARK label have been sold in Europe and North America since 1995.



WT - of children engaged in economic activity), 1 in 5 children in **Asia (61% WT)**, 1 in 6 in **Latin America (7% WT)** and 1 in 3 in **Oceania**. In Africa alone, numbers are rising by 1 million a year and are on course to top 100 million by the year 2015.

In **India**, thousands of children work to produce matches and fireworks. They are paid the equivalent of 48-57 US cents per day and work about 10-12 hours daily, seven days a week. In **Pakistan** about 75% of the country's carpet weavers are girls under the age of 14.

"Research on Girl Child Weavers in the Carpet Industry", **RUGMARK Society Pakistan**, 1999:
www.rugmark.org/news_facts

However, this is not just a problem in the developing world. In 1998, the **US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR** estimated that there were approximately 3.5 million 'legal' child workers in the **United States** (plus 1.5 million illegal child workers). In the **United Kingdom**, a recent study found that some 750,000 children between the ages of 11 and 15 work on a regular basis, with some putting in as many as 50 hours per week.

See the websites of the **US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**, www.dol.gov and the **USA BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS**; www.bls.gov

Scoring against child labour - Euro 1996. *The fact that child labour was being used to stitch footballs in Pakistan hit the headlines before the football championship started. This led to FIFA [the international football authority] issuing a Code of Practice stipulating which footballs could be used in competition. As a result of the campaign, the method of producing footballs in Pakistan changed.*

Cutting child labour.

Compulsory education has reduced child labour. In the 1920's and 1930's, the Sri Lanka government decided to enforce compulsory education. The literacy rate increased from 58% in 1946 to 86% in 1984 [UNESCO, 1991].

The corresponding result: the employment rate of children aged 10-14 has shown a substantial decline from 13% in 1946 to 6.2% in 1963, and currently stands at 5.3% for males and 4.6% for females. [ILO, 1995].

Source: www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Library/9175/inquiry1

Children are usually involved in labour-intensive work that does not require specific skills but where small hands are an asset (carpet weaving, sewing, making matches). They are often exposed to dangerous working conditions and, being **physically vulnerable**, often fall ill. They work long hours, often receive little or no schooling and are paid a pittance.

The sad fact is that there are many poor families worldwide who depend on the earnings of their children. Some policymakers believe that work plays an important and positive role in children's lives and in their relations with their families, and so seek reform, but not an end to child labour. The problem is complex but any workable solution must actively include the families of the children involved. However **the child** must be put **first**. After all, you only get one shot at being a child!

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Working not only compromises a child's physical health and safety, their rights are ignored and, crucially, they are deprived of their chance to receive an education. 150 million children drop out of primary school before they have completed four years of education. **1 in 4** Indian children will **never go to school**.



This is the beginning of a vicious circle; without education, the chances of escaping low-paid jobs and poverty are drastically reduced. Moreover, in developing countries, the **long-term consequences** of child labour are not encouraging. Children represent the hope and future potential in any country. Denying a child an education denies a country 'human capital' or the educated and skilled workers that developing countries so badly need.

872 million people, **1 in 4** adults in the developing world, **cannot read or write**. Two thirds of them are women. To provide every child in the world with a primary education will cost an extra **\$6 billion**, the same as **4 days** of global military spending.

Consumer awareness, challenging the policies of governments and companies, and **not buying** a product unless we are convinced that it has been produced without **ethical compromises**, can all make a difference. Consumers can also turn to the growing presence on the market of fair trade organisations which guarantee that their products are both environmentally friendly and produced without exploitation.

Child labour is just one particularly graphic aspect of the broader issue of **working conditions, human rights, gender inequality** and the need to respect developing countries' right to a dignified and sustainable existence.



There are several initiatives on the Net to stop child labour: www.ictu.org

Human Development Report 1998, "Consumption for Human Development" www.undp.org/hdro/1998/98

To find out more about human rights, what they encompass and what's going on and where, visit the following sites: www.web.amnesty.org www.hrw.org

Seeds for a better future. *Based on the philosophy that all children are entitled to an education and a childhood, the AMERICAN CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL LABOR SOLIDARITY'S pilot project in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania is a good example of a successful, community-based child labour programme.*

Children living on or near agricultural plantations in East Africa stop going to primary school in order to work on plantations, look after their families, or to find other jobs in neighbouring towns. Since the project set up in 1999, many children have gone back to school. To help families with the related costs, over 150 local self-help groups based on microcredit have been set up.

Changing attitudes about child labour at the grassroots level is key to this project's success. By involving families, village communities, teachers, employers and trade unions, the aim is to create an anti-child labour culture and a monitoring system that is community-based.

The training meetings are held on or close to the plantations to make it easy for all interested parties to attend. By working together at a truly local level, the community is trained to help itself and empowered and find practical solutions to its problems. [www.stopchildlabor.org/internationalchildlabor/PlantationProject]



There is a **strong link** between **SC** and the need to secure basic **human rights** and promote development. Poverty and environmental damage (through deforestation and overgrazing, for example) feed off each other and have a domino effect on human rights and development for current and future generations.

Governments have a **duty to protect** all the rights of their citizens. Sadly, there are all too many instances where human rights are abused and ignored. Increasing awareness means that people are beginning to **question** exploitative labour practices.

The **boycott**, as a campaigning tool, is gaining popularity via the web. Before boycotting, it is important to inform yourself on the possible outcomes and who it really will hit the hardest: the company or the workers you are trying to protect? Demanding transparency and **full disclosure** from companies is fundamental to ensuring that they don't just move and carry on unfair practices elsewhere. This call for transparency can channel consumer action towards **sharing** responsibility and **common aims** within the broader community.



Stepping-stones

The following suggestions are intended to help you shop ethically:

- ☞ Choose goods made/distributed by manufacturers and retailers with clear ethical policies and related **codes of conduct**.
- ☞ Keep your favourite brands under continuous **scrutiny**; contact your local consumer group to find out more about them. Join web campaigns to improve manufacturing employment practices.
- ☞ Avoid product and services offered by companies that support **oppressive regimes**.
- ☞ Boycott producers who underpay their workers or use slave labour, or whose suppliers support **slavery**.
- ☞ Whenever possible, choose products/services labelled '**NO child labour**'.
- ☞ If possible, choose products/services labelled '**NO animal testing**'.
- ☞ Boycott products/services that use **misleading** or **offensive** claims.
- ☞ **Exchange** information and experiences about ethics and goods with other consumers.

Check **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S** reports and/or website on torture, extra-judicial executions, prisoners of conscience, frequent official violence against the public, tolerating slavery.

Check anti-slavery organisations' publications and websites such as www.antislavery.org/ selection

38 See boxes.

See following chapter.

Against human and animal dignity (e.g. promoting violence, paedophilia, sexual exploitations, slavery, etc.)



Live and let live

"The cruel wild beast is not behind the bars of the cage. He stands in front of it."

[Axel Munthe, physician, psychiatrist, and writer]

The right to a dignified existence is not exclusive to humans. An awareness of our **interrelationship with nature** and the consequences of human activity for ecosystems is a key element in understanding sustainable development.

The **treatment** of animals (bred for consumption and in captivity) and the question of **biodiversity** and preserving nature's **balance** are separate but related issues. This section intends to inform. It is down to individuals to take decisions in line with their lifestyle choices and priorities within the context of sustainability.

ANIMAL FARMS

People are increasingly concerned at how animals are treated during the **production** process of goods (factory farming, testing cosmetics, etc). Cruelty can be avoided by following some fundamental principles. Treat animals respectfully: provide adequate food and shelter; ensure basic veterinary care, sanitary living conditions and never beat or force-feed.



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 WWW...

youthxchange.net
/pay-the-right-price



An Italian campaign by CARE (COOPERATION FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS IN EUROPE): www.infolav.org

Battery-cage egg production is so cruel that it is being phased out in European countries but is still practised in other parts of the world. In battery farms, four hens are typically crowded into a wire cage measuring just 40,64 cm wide (16 inches). The cages are stacked in tiers and lined up in rows in huge factory warehouses. Practically all laying hens are 'debeaked' in order to reduce injuries resulting from excessive pecking, when the confined birds become claustrophobic, bored, and aggressive. They lay more than 250 eggs a year. After one year in egg production, the birds are either shocked into another egg-laying cycle or slaughtered. Battery hens usually end up in low-grade meat products where bruised flesh can be hidden from consumers.

More than Skin Deep. Aveda, maker of plant-based cosmetics, enjoys great visible commercial success and is renowned for its commitment to the environment and the use of organic ingredients. It started over 20 years ago and has built its success on the values we now define as sustainable (no animal testing, no use of endangered species, etc.). Another well-known company that has had phenomenal success in the same area is THE BODY SHOP, as famous for its principles as it is for its products.

Food production affects us all. We can choose to **refuse products** that have not been produced in a **humane way**.

Choosing **free range** eggs and meat (look for certified products) is better for the animal, but also better for the consumer: the hygiene and quality of meat and other products coming from industrial farms can sometimes be substandard. Food scares such as mad cow disease have made us much more aware of the link between sanitary and feeding conditions for animals and our own health.

Companies have realised that consumers want to avoid unnecessary cruelty: according to the **SOCIAL INVESTMENT FORUM**, **\$84 billion** is invested in **cruelty-free** companies and organisations in the US, billions more in Europe and elsewhere.

Back in 1979, **REVLON COSMETICS** was one of the first large companies to fund **research for alternatives** to animal testing with a \$750,000 contribution to the **ROCKERFELLER UNIVERSITY**. Other organizations such as the **JOHNS HOPKINS CENTER**

Source: <http://hometown.aol.com/cfnews/index.htm>; below: paper bag supporting THE BODY SHOP 's campaign against animal testing.



FOR ALTERNATIVES TO ANIMAL TESTING (CAAT), have started their own programmes to research alternatives. Animal testing is still prevalent in large corporations but there are now several hundred 'cruelty-free' consumer-product companies.

Animal experimentation is a **controversial subject**. People's opinions on animal testing are not always clear cut and often depend on individual perceptions and personal experiences.

STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

Humans share this **planet** with at least **15 million** other species. All species play a role in building and maintaining the complex ecosystems that support all forms of life. Species are disappearing at an alarming rate. The current rate of extinction is unclear, but scientists put it at between **1,000** and **10,000** times more than it would be without uncontrolled industrial development.

The threat of extinction appears for a variety of linked reasons. **Over-harvesting** of plants and animals and their habitats, **the introduction of alien species** to ecosystems as well as climate change, **pollution** and disease all threaten the **ecological balance** between species.

For a listing of these companies visit: www.allforanimals.com/cruelfree1.htm or www.naturewatch.org for more information on cruelty free products.



See www.iucn.org/infoandnews/species2000 and www.iucn.org/infoandnews/biodiversity2000

When species establish themselves outside their natural habitats following deliberate or accidental introduction by humans.

Of Mice and Monkeys. In 1999, *NEW SCIENTIST MAGAZINE* commissioned MORI to poll people in Britain (over 15 years old) on animal experimentation. The results showed that opinions are not as clear cut as we may think. The strongest views against animal testing were held by those who had already signed petitions, bought cruelty free products or were vegetarian. More women (71%) than men (51%) were against animal experimentation. People with personal experience of taking medicine (tested on animals) for a serious illness were more tolerant of animal testing (although 52% were still opposed to it).

The survey asked whether people approved of animal experiments: when the animals suffered; were subjected to pain, illness or might die. Split into 2 groups, one was told that mice would be used; the other that monkeys would be used. A majority accepted that mice might suffer if it helped to fight life-threatening diseases. Experiments on monkeys were less tolerated and only experiments to test and develop drugs to combat child leukaemia were judged justifiable. Most British people would be against tests to develop an AIDS vaccine (where illness and suffering are likely) on monkeys.

Animal testing is still widespread because alternatives (cell cultures, the use of placental tissues or computer simulations of organs and bodies) are relatively new, under-funded and viewed as not entirely reliable. For the full article see: www.newscientist.com/hottopics/animalexperiments/letthe.jsp

Ethical shopping training. To help in your purchasing decisions - whether at home or abroad - WWF has put together a virtual tourist shop and pharmacy. Browse around and click on the various items for sale. Finding them in the real world should arouse your suspicions: www.worldwildlife.org/buyer beware

Caught out. Tuna fishermen in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean found that setting nets on dolphins to catch the tuna swimming underneath was a lucrative technique for tuna fishing, even though the practice is extremely harmful to dolphins. 7 million dolphins have been killed in the past 40 years from this practice.

In 1990, the 'dolphin-safe' tuna label was introduced in America, ensuring that any tuna caught by intentionally setting nets on dolphins could not be labelled as 'dolphin-safe' and sold in the USA.

The 'dolphin-safe' programme was one of the many provisions of the MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTION ACT of 1990. Since the implementation of its provisions, dolphin deaths have decreased by 97%. [www.savedolphins.org]

To find out more, visit:
<http://www.traffic.org/news/salaw>

Time Europe, April 17, 2000
Vol.155 No.15.

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For information on these and other species check the following sites: www.eia-international.org/Campaigns/Tigers/Reports/thailand/index; www.ecocrimes.org/cetacean_report.html#intro; www.eia-international.org/Campaigns/Elephants/Updates/t0000053; www.savedolphins.org

Diversity is a precious resource: the interplay and interdependence of different species need careful management. Nearly 30% of all medicines found in pharmacies have been developed from wild plants and animals. Many of these exist in unique and, unfortunately, threatened ecosystems. Maintaining biodiversity is pertinent at many levels: paradoxically, the areas of the world with the richest biodiversity often also have the world's poorest populations. The challenge of this century is to preserve biodiversity while eliminating poverty.

One step in the right direction is that the world's leading scientists have developed a CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD), which favours an holistic approach and has been ratified by 180 countries. The convention calls for international cooperation to conserve biological diversity; use biological resources in a sustainable manner; and ensure that the benefits arising from their use are distributed fairly.

Effective resource management means rethinking many sectors of human activity such as agriculture, fishing, tourism, education and health care. Protecting biodiversity does promote sustainable societies, particularly among indigenous peoples who best know the ecosystems closest to them.

Limiting the trade in wildlife is one way of protecting species. The CONVENTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES (CITES) aims to ensure that the trade in wild plants and animals does not pose a threat to their survival. Only the trafficking of drugs and weapons exceeds the worldwide illegal trade in wildlife. The demand for exotic pets, foods, medicines (such as tiger bone and rhino horn) and curios fuels this trade and depletes populations.

There are some success stories where species extinction or decline has been prevented: the black rhinoceros and the African elephant are two well-known examples. Between 1979-1989, poachers cut the African elephant population from 1.3 million to 625,000 but following concerted government and wildlife protection group action, elephant number are now rising again. Many species still remain under threat, however.



Eco-labels (among those recognised by governments)

1. Blue Angel (Germany)
2. European Union Ecolabel
3. Green Seal (USA)
4. Terra Choice (Canada)
5. China Environmental Labelling
6. Japan
7. Nordic White Swan
8. Austria
9. Taiwan
10. India
11. Israel
12. Miljeukeur (The Netherlands)
13. Environment 2000 (Zimbabwe)
14. South Korea
15. Aenor (Spain)
16. Green Label Thailand
17. Green Label (Hong Kong)



Better Bananas. In 2000, CHIQUITA BRANDS INTERNATIONAL was awarded the Better Banana certification for all its 127 company-owned farms in Latin America. At a time when banana companies are under public scrutiny for equity issues, it is the only global sectoral company to meet the stringent social and environmental standards of the RAINFOREST ALLIANCE'S BETTER BANANA PROJECT. The certified Chiquita bananas equal 15% of the total exported bananas from Latin America. Today, certified bananas make up over 90% of Chiquita's total volume to Europe and about 2/3 of the volume to North America. [www.greenmoney.com/gmj/june_july2001/01]

☺ **Stepping-stones**

You decide how to spend your money. Choose eco-friendly and more sustainable brands and send a strong message to supermarkets and retailers. A few pointers:

- ☞ **Think** before you buy. Think about what you need, not what you want.
- ☞ Read the **labels**: if they don't give you enough clear information, don't be afraid to ask.
- ☞ Select **eco-labelled** and **ethical-labelled** products and services.
- ☞ When possible, buy **locally produced and seasonal** goods.
- ☞ Choose products containing significant percentages of **recycled** materials or **re-manufactured** components or that are easily **disposable** and/or **recyclable**.
- ☞ **Buy direct.** If you have access to the Internet, shop 'virtually' whenever possible and cut down on transport and transport-linked pollution. If used intelligently, the Internet can contribute to more sustainable consumption.

characteristics of a product, but be careful! Only a few labels are officially recognised by governments and respond to strict and auditable criteria. Among the best known are the **EU Eco-label**, the German **Blue Angel**, the **Nordic Swan** and the French **AB** (organic agriculture).

For more information, check out the EU COMMISSION's web page: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel/index.htm>

In the USA, the **Energy Star** system is used to inform consumers on the energy efficiency of ITC. This system is currently being adopted by the EU.

See page 27.

Information and Communications Technologies.

Corporations and governments are being subjected to **increasing scrutiny** by the general public. The more people ask companies to change towards sustainability in their production and marketing methods, the more likely they are to change. If producers want to keep **consumers' trust** they have to demonstrate that they are listening to their needs and concerns.

COMMITTED INVESTMENTS

In planning for the future, we can take steps to ensure that **investment or saving** choices promote more responsible lifestyles. If enough people do it, they can also send strong signals to companies and institutions encouraging active **corporate responsibility**.



For further information on ethical finance, as well on companies that are committed to socially and environmentally responsible activities: www.cool-companies.org; www.oneworld.org/guides/ethcons/eth_invest_links.; www.co-operativebank.co.uk/ethics.html; www.ethicalconsumer.org/ECnewsite/pages/corp_critic

Companies with responsible policies can lead **by example**: others will follow, having seen that it is possible both to make money and to make a difference.

A large and growing segment of the public - both individual and institutional - is investing ethically. These people demand that investments produce more than profit and want companies to behave responsibly. There are many forms of sustainable investment. Buying shares in committed firms is one; others include investing in ethical **pension funds**, **securities** and **community initiatives**.

Microcredit programmes extend small loans to very poor people for self-employment projects that generate income, allowing them to care for themselves and their families. - Source: MICROCREDIT SUMMIT, <http://www.gdrc.org/icm>

Ethical funds also offer the opportunity to address both **global** and **local needs**. Channelling essential capital to village level creates **microcredit** and small business opportunities for entrepreneurs around the globe. Such schemes empower people facing economic and social difficulties.



www.youthxchange.net/best-practices

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs). EXPORT CREDIT AGENCIES (ECAs) are national government instruments that use public money to provide financing, guarantees and insurance to the private sector. They make it easier for companies to invest in risky overseas markets because they absorb much of the risk associated with such investments. ECAs are designed to promote exports.

Canada and the USA are currently opposed to some of these recommendations.



For a recent report on OPIC and ExIm done with Friends of the Earth, visit: www.seen.org/reports/oeordonl

Governments can also take the lead in ethical investing through their multilateral and international financing and investment decisions. Efforts are being made at an international level, for example, to promote renewable energy by **increasing funding** through the reform of IFIs and ECAs. The G8 RENEWABLE ENERGY TASK FORCE, set up at the G8 Summit in Okinawa (July 2000), formulated key actions in this area.

What should the **ethical investor** look out for when deciding where to put his/her money? Here are some pointers:

- ▶ What does the company do?
- ▶ What is the company's record on social policies and environmental issues? Does it use alternative energy?
- ▶ Does it offer information on the environmental impact of its product 'from cradle to grave'?
- ▶ What is the company's record as an employer? (women, minorities, flexible hours, job-shares, etc.)
- ▶ Is the company involved in local community projects and initiatives?

The need for consistency. *ECAs are an example of a contradictory approach to the use of public money. Each year two US export credit agencies - EXPORT IMPORT BANK (EX-IM) and OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION (OPIC) - subsidise fossil fuel projects in developing countries and economies in transition. These investments account for nearly two-thirds of the total emissions released from within US borders annually. At the same time other projects (more sustainable ones) which receive much less funding are widely publicised to demonstrate these countries' commitment to the environment. Since the EARTH SUMMIT in 1992, the two ECAs have spent 62 times the amount of money on fossil fuel projects compared to renewable ones. [Study by INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES: www.seen.org/exim/index]*

Microcredit for youth. *In Bangladesh, UNESCO has set up several projects in the slums of Dhaka, the capital. One such project, NARI MAITREE (the women's alliance) has helped 300 adolescents complete training courses and obtain microfinancing. These adolescents "represent the most vulnerable section of the population," stresses Sayeeda Rahman, "because they are threatened by forced marriages, sexual abuse and prostitution. By setting up their own little business, they can earn money and become a valued asset of their families. A good example is the case of two girls who trained to drive scooters to transport girls and women (only) to school every morning. And the people accepted this, an indication that attitudes have changed." [UNESCO Sources magazine, June 1999. Section: Youth]*



Discover the global village

"Let the villages of the future live in our imagination, so that we might one day, come to live in them."

[Mahatma Gandhi]

Young people today often live in a media-rich environment, experiencing an **unprecedented flood** of images and data from many different sources. They are inundated with information on politics and current affairs, music, science, the 'hottest' new celebrities, fashion, and a myriad of other topics and issues. Children are growing up in a culture where most of their information and entertainment comes from the **media**: newspapers, radio, magazines, film, the Internet, or television.

How do these media work? How are they organised, and how do they construct reality? **Media literacy** helps people develop a critical understanding of the mass media, the techniques used by media professionals, and their impact. In other words, it enables young people to make their own informed decisions.

Moreover, it can help young people react against the pervasive media **influence** on their consumption patterns and desires. It also will teach them how to 'use' the media to 'make a noise' and promote new values and a more sustainable lifestyle. In other words: their **rights** as citizens and consumers.

ADVERTISING

Some advertisements specifically **target** young people. They use language, images and messages that strike a chord with teenagers, but which might not have the same appeal to their parents (e.g. ads for video-games, snack food or music).

In the USA, only 10% of children's viewing time is spent watching children's television. The other 90% is spent watching programs designed for adults.

35% of teenagers have a TV in their room and eat their meals alone in front of the screen.

Source: US NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN; L'Espresso, 27 September 2001, p. 104.

UNEP is working with the advertising sector to channel their skills to promote more sustainable lifestyles. For further information: www.uneptie.org/sustain/advertising/advertising

The average US teen watches approximately 23 hours of television per week. Children spend more time in front of a TV screen than in school. By the time they turn 18, they have witnessed more than 100,000 violent acts and 300,000 commercials. Young people spend twice as much time with the media than they do with their parents and teachers combined.

Source: www.weta.org and
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 1996.

They want people to start using their products when they are young and continue using them for the rest of their lives.

Teenagers, in fact, are important targets for advertisers because companies need to build brand loyalty.

Often, advertising delivers simplified messages using stereotypes. So, for instance, advertisers create campaigns directed at girls that are different from campaigns directed at guys. Often an ad will tell you whether a product is 'masculine' or 'feminine', even though the product could be used by either gender.

A **stereotype** rigidly confirms the belief that if you are male or female (or white or black; heterosexual or homosexual), you must conform to **specific roles**. This belief takes away our personal choices in determining our own interests and skills.

We don't have to sit back and accept all the messages the media (especially advertising) feed us. We can **'talk back'** and voice our opinions.

*In 1999 **Calvin Klein** ads were withdrawn because consumers complained they sexualised children.*

***Camel** cigarettes had to stop using the 'Joe Camel' character in advertisements thanks to consumer complaints that it targeted kids.*

www.media-awareness.ca

Culture and class stereotypes also are prevalent on **television**. Often minorities are portrayed stereotypically and are rarely shown to be as powerful or as rich as the majority. Furthermore, TV programmes are regularly seen by an **audience** that is well beyond the target group.

The very young watch programmes containing staple 'ingredients' like violence, sex, social trauma, etc. that they do not have the **emotional maturity** or critical capacity to cope with. An adult can analyse, children tend to absorb. Children who watch a large amount of violent programmes tend to favour using aggression to resolve conflicts.

Weighed down... *Deluged by media images of skinny role models, girls are being persuaded that thinness is the key to love and acceptability. Girls are now becoming weight conscious as young as eight years old; 80% of nine year olds are on diets.*

Eating disorders have increased 400% since 1970, 20% of college girls have anorexia and self-destructive behaviour among high school girls has reached epidemic proportions.

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Founded in 1995, the US-based JUST THINK FOUNDATION teaches media education programs to young people all over the world. JUST THINK launched a new important initiative to specifically address the issue of body image among young girls: www.justthink.org/sweetwater/bip

On-screen violence may shock, but other **more subtle** messages can also have a life-long influence on young people. If repeated incessantly, they often change lifestyles, such as by encouraging over-consumption or promoting **eating disorders**.

IDOLS & AUDIENCES

Actors, models, sport champions, however, do sometimes provide **positive role models**. The media act as a **catalyst** in raising awareness and capturing the attention of the huge youth audience.

Music – a **universal language** by definition - is probably the medium that has carried strong social messages most consistently. Examples? Events such as **LIVE AID**, **FARM AID**, **THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TOUR**, **OUR COMMON FUTURE**, **GREENPEACE ALBUM**, etc. These events also shape the meaning of the audience's participation. Enjoying a performance becomes a gesture of political or humanitarian solidarity.

Nowadays, young people feel comfortable with the media. There are thousands of websites run for and by teenagers. Their **commitment** to promoting often complex causes (e.g. human rights, environment) is proof of their ability not only to channel the media, but also **their talents** towards sustainable projects.



Serious Fun. *ADBUSTERS is a Canadian-based non-profit-making organisation that produces a magazine and a website dedicated to examining the relationship between "human beings and their physical and mental environment". Self-styled 'culture-jammers', they try to provide another perspective on life and our daily habits. Encouraging people to question the media, they point out obvious and hidden messages that are transmitted and often taken for granted.*

Through their parodies of famous ads as well as their own annual campaigns such as 'Buy Nothing Day' and 'TV Turn Off Week', they push people to rethink their priorities and lifestyles as well as raising awareness on a variety of issues (inequality, overconsumption, media manipulation, etc.). Although some people may not approve of their tactics, Adbusters is a lively and creative organisation which has a particular talent: using the advertising industry's very own skills to question the media's role and influence. This is a clear example of the power of an active, networking group. [www.adbusters.org].



Networking: directions for use

"Service to others
is the rent you pay for your
room here on earth."

[Muhammad Ali,
world boxing champion]

The Internet is becoming more important, both as a communication tool and a **gateway** to information. Although the global phenomenon of the Net is actually still limited, it is the medium of the future that best captures the capabilities and **talent** of young people today. The Internet is also a 'language' that a large and rising number of young people are fluent in.

This **tool kit** has been designed with both trainers and students in mind. While this guide represents a quick overview on the **topics and challenges** of SC, on the YOUTHXCHANGE (YXC) website you will explore the issue more in depth.

Popular subjects (e.g. music, fashion, cinema, sports and new media) are used as **springboards** for discussions. **Icons** will play a key role in developing an easy-to-follow path throughout the website, complementing a clear, simple and direct language of the brief texts.

Why the Internet? New technologies complement and do not replace traditional training tools. When applied to education, and used as means and not ends, they can create great opportunities. The Internet could have a **snowball effect**, multiplying the positive results of learning for all those involved: teachers, young people, institutions, companies and NGOs.

Sharing experiences – **networking** - will have the added value of encouraging direct and active involvement in promoting sustainable lifestyles. The YXC website will catch and keep the users' attention by stimulating creativity, enabling them to choose **how** and **what** to learn. Real **examples** are the starting point in highlighting a variety of goods and services, initiatives, facts and figures, case studies.

*In 2000, 90% of Internet traffic
took place between 12 countries
(Tomorrow, Sept-Oct. 2000).*



Our Website - www.youthxchange.net - is structured in the following way:

- ▶ **Trainer's room:** the contents of the site are explained, room-by-room. The teaching potential of each is highlighted. It will give the trainer practical suggestions on how to develop and further explore the issues already mentioned in this guide.
- ▶ **10 basics button:** a horizontal navigational tool directing both trainer and user to issues through the perspective of young adults' WANTS AND NEEDS. It also guides you in the journey towards a 'sustainable community'.
- ▶ **Facts & figures atlas:** a highly visual, interactive and imaginative atlas giving key facts on past, present and future consumption patterns, and therefore putting consumption distribution in a global context.
- ▶ **Best practice:** what is on offer for the individual wanting to become a more responsible consumer? What policies, initiatives, products and services are available? How easy is it? What are other stakeholders (local and national governments, NGOs, international organisations and institutions, etc.) doing? Visiting the SUSTAINABLE DEPARTMENT STORE, the user discovers how to translate awareness into action.
- ▶ **Test & Game:** quizzes the user's growing knowledge and awareness of SC. Complex, more horizontal issues such as energy saving, water and nutrition will be explored in an entertaining way.
- ▶ **Job opportunities:** organised as a virtual recruitment agency with a selection of testimonials from young people, the user finds out how action can make a difference. The room will show users that it is possible to achieve professional success linking employment, travel and voluntary work to the principles of SC.
- ▶ **FAQs:** frequently asked questions are answered. Find out how YXC works; look up concepts and terms, find further information on this project. This room will promote the value of asking questions.
- ▶ **Links:** a list of interesting websites, organised thematically (according to the sections in the guide). To make surfing on the Net both enjoyable and productive, each site is briefly described and assessed.

Sources

Websites, books, etc. mentioned in the Guide.

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About MÉTA

An international NGO that groups together specialists in environment, sustainable development and communication, dedicated to the promotion of sustainable development through new media and technology. The main activities of the association include research, event organisation, developing publishing products, communication campaigns and giving technical and scientific support to public and private organisations. MÉTA previously worked with UNEP DTIE on "*Advertising for a Better World*" an initiative to encourage the media to get involved in the promotion of SC. MÉTA developed the general concept, researched and finalised the YOUTH X CHANGE training tool kit.

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About CI

Founded in 1960, CI is an independent, non-profit organisation that supports, links and represents consumer groups and agencies worldwide and strives to promote a fairer society by defending the rights of all consumers, including poor, marginalized and disadvantaged people. Recognising that meeting the needs of tomorrow's consumers will depend on shifts towards more sustainable consumption patterns, CI supported the YOUTH X CHANGE project by helping to collect data and providing advice on the output.

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