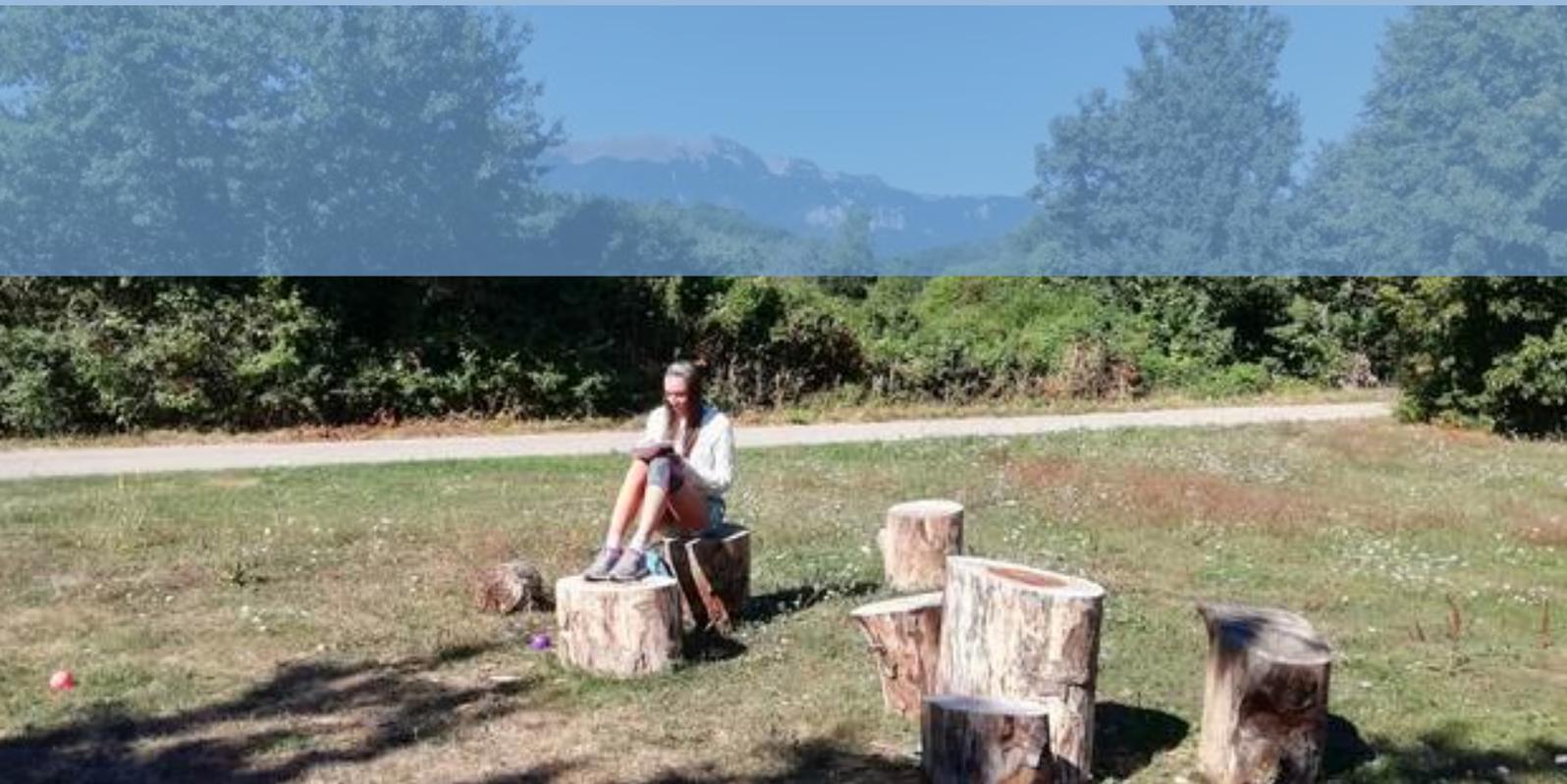


# Ecocentric Youth Exchange Booklet

“Ecocentric Youth Exchange” hosted by Culture and Education Association took place from 16<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021 in Lovinac, Croatia and gathered 20 participants from Lithuania, Italy and Croatia.

Project was funded by the Erasmus+ program of the European Commission with the support of the Croatian Agency for mobility and EU programs.





Ecocentric Youth Exchange focused on ecocentric approach in daily lives, giving young people time and space in beautiful untouched nature of the rural Croatia, near Velebit mountain, to learn, share, get inspired and raise awareness about sustainable ways of living, steps towards sustainability, ecological and environmental issues caused by modern civilization and its' habits and ways and approaches to solving these issues (permaculture, green energy, solar energy, composting, responsible waste management, responsible and sustainable choices in consuming goods, in travelling, in our diet etc.)

Participants learned in practical way through non-formal and informal education methods, workshops, sharing sessions, outdoor activities, they worked in groups and individually, did research, presentations and were involved in an interactive way in an international group supported by their team leaders.

Participants visited the Centre for creative solution of the hosting organization which is a self-sustainable place in the means of energy, water and food, consisting of a permacultural farm, solar panels, off the grid tiny house on wheels with compost toilets, where they learned from a real life example.

Goal of this booklet is to present the results of participants' work during this youth exchange, raise awareness about the important topics and issues that participants have chosen and tackled and to inspire young people and organizations to focus on these crucial societal issues concerning the environment, climate and our future.

Project was implemented in cooperation with an NGO Euro Sud from Italy and Global Citizens' Academy from Lithuania.

# EATING SUSTAINABLY:



Sofia Casati, Italy

## 1. Shop locally

Search for associations that collect food from farms near to your town. In this way, even if you don't have a farm you'll get the chance to support one and get to know a bit of how your food is grown. You'll help farmers, have tastier and seasonal food. Also, try to drink tap water (if it's possible in the place you live), you'll never have to worry about being thirsty and you'll save an enormous amount of plastic: let's assume you drink 2,5l per day and an average bottle is 2l, in a year you'll waste more than 450 bottles!

## 2. Be creative

Nowadays we are lucky to have everything available, so let's use the variety! Try new things, be curious and listen to what your body really needs. Have fun in your kitchen creating new dishes with colourful vegetables and give a try to vegetarian options, maybe you'll find out that a veggie burger or some curry with tofu has actually a pretty yummy flavour (plus generally is healthier and cheaper than meat!). Try to use herbs and spices to give flavour to your recipes, maybe even experiment growing something yourself, so you'll be able to appreciate what it takes to create food.

## 3. Sometimes "less is more"

Go for organic meat and look for a better quality food, it'll be better for your body and will keep you satisfied for longer time. It's very common to maintain a diet full of meat just because we are used to, but we don't need it as frequently. I'm not saying to avoid meat completely, but just reducing the amount of it. If everyone'd do this, it'll make a big difference in the health of humans, animals and the whole planet.

And remember: a not balanced diet can occur in any type of diet (meat free or not!), it depends on the attention we put on our lifestyle. So be a more mindful eater, where you feel like removing meat from your plate or just reducing the amount of it, maybe going for organic and happily grown animals. If "we are what we eat", it's better to eat in a way that stimulates our compassion, not our misogyny.

## 4. Be aware

Check the numbers and collect information about the business of meat production! See what sacrifices the planet has to do to maintain your diet. For example: according to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), chemical and animal waste runoff from factory farm is responsible for more than 173000 miles of polluted rivers and streams. Runoff from farmlands is one of the greatest threats to water quality today.

Gift idea: for somebody's birthday or any other celebration you can find lots of websites that accept donations for planting trees and name them after the person you want, they'll send you the fruits your tree will grow! Or you can do a donation for the animals at websites like WWF and receive a certificate reminding your help in making this world a better place. People are happy to see that their special day made you think about sharing love with a bigger public!

# SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL:



Toma Klusaite, Lithuania

Sustainable travel means finding a way that tourism can be maintained long-term without harming natural and cultural environments (40% of the world's carbon emissions will be generated by tourism by 2050)

## Tips for travelling more sustainably

Become a slow traveller

Take direct flights where possible

Respect the local culture and traditions – do a research before traveling

Eat & drink locally and buy locally made souvenirs

If you are staying in a hotel, ask for the staff not to change your towels and bed linen every day

If possible, stay with local people or search for sustainable accommodation which supports locals, has minimal environmental impact, and doesn't destroy local culture <https://ecobnb.com/> <https://bookitgreen.com/en/>

Use sustainable tour operators with green accreditations (GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council), Green Globe Rainforest Alliance)

Only participate in responsible wildlife tourism

Volunteer with NGOs and join community tourism projects

Pack light – luggage adds up to the carbon emissions

Pack eco-friendly essentials

Lastly, try to make sure that your chosen destination benefits from your stay.

# FAST FASHION:



Vida Ivanković, Croatia

Gabija Rožėnaitė, Lithuania

How green is eco fashion?  
What do you know about fast fashion?

Environmental issues:

Clothing production is the third biggest manufacturing industry after the automotive and technology industries. Textile production contributes more to climate change than international aviation and shipping combined" (House of Common Environmental Audit Committee, 2019)

The textile sector still represents 10 to 20 percent of pesticide use." The State of Fashion, McKinsey, 2020)  
93% of brands surveyed by the Fashion Checker aren't paying garment workers a living wage" (Fashion Checker, 2020)

Washing, solvents, and dyes used in manufacturing are responsible for one-fifth of industrial water pollution" (McKinsey, 2020)

Nearly 70 million barrels of oil are used each year to make the world's polyester fiber, which is now the most commonly used fiber in our clothing. But it takes more than 200 years to decompose." (Forbes, 2015)

The production of polyester textiles alone emitted about 706 billion kilograms of greenhouse gases in 2015

Human rights issues:

in 2013 an sweatshop in Bangladesh collapsed killing 1154 workers

many use child and forced labour

foreign countries take advantage of less strict labour laws of third world countries

Green washing:

Study of the websites of 12 of the biggest British and European fashion brands, including Asos, H&M and Zara, has found that 60% of the environmental claims could be classed as "unsubstantiated" and "misleading".

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has set out recommendations on avoiding greenwashing, some of those are:

Ensuring accuracy

Ensuring that claims are clear and unambiguous, understood by consumers unanimously

Ensuring that important information is not omitted or hidden deliberately

Ensuring that 'fair and meaningful' comparisons can be made between products

Ensuring that the full life-cycle of a product is taken into account (i.e. differentiate between recyclable and includes recycled content)

Ensuring that claims can be substantiated. Businesses must be able and prepared to back up claims with "robust, credible and up-to-date" evidence when challenged by a consumer or interested group.

# FAST FASHION:



## H&M

Its environment rating is 'it's a start'. It uses some eco-friendly materials including recycled materials but 96% of their products were not following CMA guidelines

Almost none of its supply chain is certified by labour standards which ensure worker health and safety, living wages or other labour rights

Has set a science-based target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated from its own operations and supply chain but there is no evidence it is on track to meet its target.

They make approximately 3 billion garments each year

## ZARA:

Its environment rating is 'not good enough'.

It uses few eco-friendly materials.

There is no evidence it minimises textile waste when manufacturing its products.

There is no evidence it ensures payment of a living wage in its supply chain

It uses leather, down and exotic animal hair.

It produces about 800 million garments a year and only 70 million of these garments are from their join life collection.

## ASOS:

ASOS's environment rating is 'not good enough', There is no evidence it minimises textile waste when manufacturing its products

Its labour rating is 'not good enough'. Almost none of its supply chain is certified by labour standards which ensure worker health and safety, living wages or other labour rights

ASOS has...been caught lying to its customers. A pair of ASOS trousers claim to be 'mono-material' and therefore 'designed to be remade' or recycled. Yet, the product is actually a blend of 54 per cent nylon and 46 per cent polyester – a mixture impossible to recycle with current technology,"

89% of their claims do not meet the CMA guidelines

## SHEIN:

SHEIN's environment rating is 'very poor'

There is no evidence that it has taken meaningful action to reduce or eliminate hazardous chemicals. It uses few eco-friendly materials

There is no evidence it reduces its carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions in its supply chain

Steals designs

# FAST FASHION:



## COTTON

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) is a non-profit, multistakeholder governance group that promotes better standards in cotton farming and practices across 21 countries. As of 2017, Better Cotton accounts for 14% of global cotton production.

Partner retailers include H&M, Gap, IKEA, and Levi Strauss.

## POLYESTER

polyester is a common plastic with a wide range of applications extending beyond the fashion industry. the majority of polyesters are not biodegradable, meaning that the polyester fabric shirt you bought last season will not decompose for 20 years at best and 200 years at worst.

it takes a special kind of dye to colour polyester successfully these dyes, known as disperse dyes, are insoluble in water. Like polyester, they are made up of a complex molecular structure that does not readily decompose.

multiple studies have shown that synthetic fibres make up a good share of microplastics found in waters and are widely implicated as the source of pollution

polyester, nylon, elastine, lycra, spandex, sometimes satin

## ALTERNATIVES

second-hand clothing

up-cycling

sharing among friends and family

sewing

# NEGATIVE IMPACT OF MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND HUMANS:



Elise Lattanzi, Italy

Evil to drink. Investigations into a powerful multinational.

Coca-cola was invented in 1886 by John Pemberton. The original formula contained cocaine to treat depression, for example.

Of course, there isn't trace of the drug now, but it can be seen that the name alludes to the word: cocaine. Coca-cola is the most sold drink in the world: about two billion bottles a day, 500 brands distributed in 200 countries.

In the United States there is the historical seat of Atlanta, where there is the safe that keeps his magic formula: the first secret of his success.

Like all soft drink companies, it needs a common good: the water.

San Juan de Chamula, in the centre of Chiapas, in Mexico, is home to the largest bottling company on the Planet. The establishment is located at the foot of Mount Wipetec, a mountain called The Water Mountain, sacred to the Maya. This establishment is located above an aquifer that is the main water supply for the city.

Here, Coca-cola takes about 6000 litres of water a day, paying very little and privatizing the local water resources. In fact, in San Cristobal the Las Casas, nothing comes out of the taps of the houses, and so inhabitants have to buy cisterns, supplied by Coca-cola, which don't contain much water.

How does Coca-cola make up for the water shortages it creates?

By promoting and carrying out various projects, such as returning the water, it steals, to school by means of tankers, signed by 'Foundation Coca-cola'.

In Chiapas there is also the problem of the indoctrination of the Coca-cola culture.

But what it means?

It means that Coca-cola, in the minds of these people, occupies an almost divine role.

For examples, in the Church of San Juan Baptist, catholicism is accompanied by rituals, candles, chickens sacrifices and bottles of Coca-cola.

In practice, it is believed that Coca-cola is a tool to purify the soul and body from demons because after drinking it, people burp.

In Cruston, an indigenous communities, people privately sell, for example 2,5 litres of Coca-cola for one pesos. Every shop sells Coca-cola and every person drinks a lot of it, in fact, deaths from diabetes are many and frequent.

Coca-cola, in order to disprove the accusation that sugary drinks are bad for you, has paid many scientific centres to prove the innocence of these drink.

SCANDALOUS

I hope that the truth about this dangerous multinational will spread so that the consumption of this drink and then all other colored drinks will decrease.

I will commit myself to this.

# INTENSIVE AGRICULTURE ISSUES:



Apurva Upadhyay, Lithuania

The beginning of intensive agriculture dates back to beginning of human civilization's entry to agriculture. Reaping high yields with strong and often extreme land exploitation and often extreme inputs over the same piece of land makes it different from concept of extensive agriculture where vast amount of lands are acquired or converted from forest on remote areas. The graph shows the surface area distribution of earth classifying it as undeveloped (forest, mountains etc.), human modified i.e grasslands, farming, mines, roads, rural housing & logging etc.

There have been several documentaries, TV debates, articles on the theme of eradicating food crisis & world hunger, but the contradicting question which doesn't gets limelight is - Do we actually need more food?

Several research publications suggest we are already food sufficient to feed 10 bn people (1.5x times more than we need) So what are the issues we need to address?

The major issue that needs attention is storage & distribution of existing food production.

How can we achieve that - by using addressing these 4 factors:

Political motivation: A geopolitical initiative with cooperation in field of technology transfer for efficient storage & providing market availability of the produce across the globe.

Supply chain: Supply chain needs to strengthen in such a way that food produced in one end world can reach effective the demanding market on the other end of the world. Per ex. 30-40% of total food produced in India gets spoiled / wasted due to weak supply chain & unavailability of regional or international market.

PPP Model: To address both the factors mentioned above, collective approach such public private partnership model needs to implemented since it get advantage of policy making power of public/ governance sector & infrastructure plus technological expertise of private sector. Coming together, while less prioritizing the profit margin target by private companies & considering this project as global challenge, the PPP initiatives could result severely effective results as they did during times of World Wars. As of now majority of decisions in private sector & governance is made keeping higher profit margin in mind that pushes them towards intensive agriculture & excessive exploitation of their lands despite the fact that the same food could be naturally growing without intensive agriculture elsewhere on the planet. (maybe even in nearby regions)

Carbon footprint: More & more cattles are raised for consumption of dairy & meat products, along with increase usage of the hybrid breeds which significantly reduces natural nutrients present in the natural milk for example. A simple analysis of lactose intolerant population over the no. of years could suggest how the hybrid breeds of cattles are becoming producing unhealthy dairy. Additionally, raising more cattles for consumption of meat is vastly damaging the ecosystem, as for an estimate - earlier research by CSIRO in Australia estimated that it takes 15,000 litres of water to produce 1kg of beef, but only 1,010 litres to produce 1kg of wheat, 2,200 for soybeans and 2,385 for rice. Hence going meat free could be the most basic step we could take as contributions of healthy planet.

# HOW TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE TOWARD A GREENER DIRECTION:



Giada Balsamo, Italy

“How to influence people toward a greener direction?” -to answer this question I addressed behavioral economics, choice architecture, nudges, heuristics and cognitive biases.

Behavioral economics combines psychology and economics to create a framework to understand how and when people make errors. So, since every environmental issue is related to human behavior, it is possible to design policies that exploit heuristics, cognitive biases and/or limited willpower and attention.

Nudges are key policy instruments, that can be defined as interventions that aim at altering people’s behavior by either harnessing their cognitive biases or responding to them, while keeping options set and monetary incentives structures largely intact.

The choice architecture summarizes the way choices are presented, framed and structured, so to nudge someone means to deliberately intervene in a given choice architecture. Nudges can only be effective in a world where people have limited mental resources, and that’s why it is important to explain some of the main heuristics and biases before showing some examples of green nudges.

Heuristics are mental shortcuts that are used to swap hard problems into easier ones and the most relevant are affect heuristic (evaluations made based on emotions attached to alternatives) , availability heuristic (evaluations made relying on what easily come to mind because of temporal or personal salience), representativeness heuristic (evaluations made based on how similar two events seem and whether one belongs to or originate from the other), anchoring heuristic (evaluations made by beginning with an initial value and then adjusting to obtain a final judgment).

Cognitive biases are systematic patterns of deviation from norm and/or rationality in judgement, some examples might be cognitive ease (what can be recalled or processed easily is more likely to be factored into decision making), status quo bias (inertia that can be exploited through green defaults), confirmation bias (deliberate need for confirming evidence), overthinking bias (overload of information can lead to mental strain and indifference when facing a decision).

Finally, let’s see some examples of green nudges in different contexts:

Regarding meat consumption, it has been proved that changing the cafeteria menu to vegetarian only and moving meat-based options to a separate menu increased the proportion of vegetarian meals ordered by 50%. Also, commitments to eat less meat reduced meat consumption by 15%.

Regarding transportation choices, it has been found that direct financial incentives, such as monetary payments and discounts had no effect; instead, other monetary incentives, such as bus tickets or travel vouchers were more effective in encouraging sustainable transportation behavior.

## HOW TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE TOWARD A GREENER DIRECTION:



Regarding waste production, some experiments revealed that reducing the default plate size reduced food waste by 20%; also, switching default printing settings to double sided printing reduced paper waste consumption by 15%.

Again, providing information that 75% of hotel guests reused their towels increased the reuse of towels, due to peer comparison. Another example, related to reducing energy consumption, comes from the United States, where the Government sent letters to those who consumed a lot of electricity suggesting that their neighbors used less energy, and this led to reduce their consumption.

To conclude, I think that nudges are a good instrument to support individual choices, but also, we as individuals must take reasonable choices in order to influence the market and make a shift toward a more sustainable future, both for us and for the environment.

# DEFORESTATION, HABITAT LOSS AND THE IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SPREADING OF THE DISEASES



Valentina Bruno, Italy

The message of participant Valentina on this topic is summarized in these 2 videos:

<https://www.internazionale.it/video/2020/11/03/come-evitare-prossima-pandemia>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ic-J6hcSKa8>

# REFORESTATION PROJECTS BY SCOUT SOCIETY IN CROATIA:



Nika Perko and Marija Beroš, Croatia

We would like to present good practice examples to serve as motivation and inspiration - 2 connected projects about reforestation of local area after a huge fire. Since both of us are scouts and scouts were one of the organizers of these 2 projects, we thought we could bring this topic closer to other participants as well as inform others about these projects and start a discussion about which project they could implement/ have already implemented in their countries.

We presented our project with power point presentation which was followed by a question if they heard about any project related to the exchange topic in their countries. After a few examples, we asked participants if they have any idea what project they could implement in their town/village/country with their NGOs/student groups/friends. We had interesting examples from also planting trees that have been cut down/destroyed to making reusable plastic cups in bars. We improved each others ideas with advices and critics to hopefully our projects can be even better in the future!

Listed hereafter is a transcript of our presentation:

“Boranka” is Croatians largest volunteer afforestation action of the fire-devastated areas of Dalmatia. The biggest fire was in 2017 and we call it “The mother of all fires”. It started on 17 of July and because of the strong wind it spread a lot faster. You could see the smoke from the space, and it stretched all the way to Italy.

The main organizer of this project is the Croatian Scout Society. It gathered volunteers from all parts of Croatia on the Mosor mountain to plant trees. It was decided to use trees burned down to make a black ash, which was then used to make a one-of-a-kind ingredient in producing crayons called Boralice. So, the idea was that by using those crayons everyone drew their own tree and uploaded it to the website. By doing so they take part in helping the forest grow, because for every uploaded tree the real seed is planted by scouts and other volunteers. In this way the burnt black charcoal is symbolically utilized to make a new tree and return the green color to the blackened wildfire sits. And that is the beauty of “Boranka”, because it is the only coloring book that brings life back to wildfire sits. For now, there have been around 6200 volunteers and they planted over 65000 trees.

“Boranka” was continued with watering project called “Be my water” or “Zaljevanka”. So, for six weeks, volunteers from various parts of Croatia were watering trees that were planted as part of the campaign “Boranka”. Long, dry periods and reduced rainfall during the year were a major obstacle to the survival of planted seedlings. Without watering planted seedlings, the probability of their survival is total of 20-30%, but with periodic watering, the probability rises to 70-80%.



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