



SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

options & opportunities

Take actions together to minimize footprints
and maximize impacts

UN 
environment

United Nations
Environment Programme

one earth
rethinking the good life

OCTOBER 2018



© United Nations Environment Programme, 2018

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part and in any form for educational or non-profit purposes without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgement of the source is made. United Nations Environment Programme would appreciate receiving a copy of any publication that uses this publication as a source. No use of this publication may be made for resale or for any other commercial purpose whatsoever without prior permission in writing from the United Nations Environment Programme.

Disclaimer

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Moreover, the views expressed do not necessarily represent the decision or the stated policy of the United Nations Environment Programme, nor does citing of trade names or commercial processes constitute endorsement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Authors | Dagmar Timmer (One Earth) Dwayne Appleby (One Earth) Vanessa Timmer (One Earth) |
| Contributors | Garrette Clark (UN Environment) Mari Nishimura (UN Environment) |
| UN Environment interns | Ajith Francis, Alexia Legrand, Nanaki Vij |
| UN Environment consultants | Mateo Ledesma, Sarah Yvonne Harper |

We are grateful to the following colleagues who provided key insights, action ideas and support on drafts, including the project teams and advisors in Marrakech and Bogota. The responsibility for the contents of this publication remains with the co-authors. With thanks to: Susan Andrade, Lewis Akenji, Juan David Arias Forero, André Barreto, María Fernanda Benavides, Olga María Bermúdez, Jason Bolívar Silva, Luis Miguel Casabianca González, Nicolas Steven Castillo, Gabriel Yohan Coime Cabezas, Rosemary Cooper, Felipe Cortés, Sonia María Díaz, María Jimena Daza Martínez, Robertus De Jong, Juan Sebastian Devia, Adina Dumitru, Fabián Echegaray, Misgana Elías, Laura Escobar Chiquiza, Bert Fabian, María Camila Fernández, Obed Alfonso Fragozo Manjarrez, Nicolas Daniel Galvis, Geraldine Isabel Garavito, Paula Alejandra García, Silvia Andrea García, Simon Gilby, Ben Gill, María Fernanda González, Helen Goodland, Francisco Grau, Hillary Green, María Teresa Holguín, Laura Iguavita, Luca Ivorra Peñafort, Claire Kneller, Cecilia Lopez Y Royo Di Taurisano, Anu Mänty, Eduardo Manzanera, Caixia Mao, Diana Martínez, Sofía Martínez Daza, Charlie Matthews, Lorena Mejía, Ricardo Mendoza Mogollón, Alastair Moore, Jennie Moore, Camila Morentres, Juan Pablo Moya Ramírez, Kenneth Ochoa, Veronica Orozco, Marina Ortolleti, Viviana Osorno Acosta, Diego Ospina, Laura Vanessa Ospina, Diana Carolina Páez Moreno, Javier Perdomo, Denise Philippe, William E. Rees, Helena Rey de Assis, Jessica Alejandra Rivas Sánchez, Marcela Rodríguez Beltrán, Paola Andrea Romero, Julio Andrés Rozo, Johan David Salazar, Iván Sánchez, Ángela Sarmiento, Natalia Sarmiento, María Alejandra Serrano, Nora Steurer, Steven Stone, Alejandra Tovar, Juan Sebastián Vega, Sebastián Vega, Allison Viafara Pinzón, Yassine Zegzouti.

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Please cite as | United Nations Environment Programme, One Earth (2018). Sustainable Lifestyles: Options and Opportunities. Paris: UN Environment. |
| Layout Design | Backyard Creative (Lisa Hemingway, Keiko Lee-Hem) |
| Front and back cover design | Jessica Hyne |
| Images | Most images are sourced from Unsplash; photographers are credited in this document |



SUMMARY

This publication offers proven actions for creating and inspiring more sustainable lifestyles. Based on research and project work in Bogota and Marrakech, it provides the rationale, resources and ideas for developing initiatives that cover core lifestyle areas of food, mobility, housing, consumer goods and leisure as well as in general sustainable lifestyle areas. This publication prioritizes high level impact options and suggests low effort actions to get started and move things in the right direction.

Lifestyle initiatives can also help set the foundation for deeper changes required in policy and infrastructure contexts to design and deliver more sustainable living opportunities for people. The following lifestyle options are not standalone efforts but are an important first step to engage and create the needed momentum for greater change. Governments can, for example, implement carbon and consumption taxes to redirect spending, support collaborative innovation and enhance public transit systems and sustainable urban living approaches. The private sector can design and deliver more holistic sustainable options, such as models around sharing mobility, housing and consumer goods. Individuals can encourage governments (and business) to do the ‘heavy lifting’ to forge a more sustainable society.

This publication is written for people designing and running initiatives with limited resources who want maximum impact. We welcome you to explore these proven ideas and to create initiatives that work in your context – because what works in Brazil is different from what works in Morocco.

This publication begins with a brief background on sustainable lifestyles, the rationale for how and why options are included, and points to consider when designing initiatives. Each chapter provides an annotated listing of suggested actions with example references. Use the list of options to get started in general lifestyles initiatives and/or in the core areas of food, mobility, consumer goods, housing and leisure. For the best impact, link options together, build on existing activities, and partner with others.

Of course, this is not a complete list – add your own ideas! We invite you to join the One Planet Network, which is an implementation mechanism of Sustainable Development Goal 12. Share your experiences, ideas and activities on the knowledge platform on Sustainable Consumption and Production – [the One Planet Network website](#) – so that we can all learn together how to advance sustainable lifestyles in more effective ways.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| About this Publication | 5 |
| What are Sustainable Lifestyles? | 6 |
| Prioritizing Actions to Advance Sustainable Lifestyles | 7 |
| Defining Lifestyle Impacts: Ecological Footprint Data | 8 |
| This Publication: Options to Get Started | 11 |
| Adopt a Connected Approach: Examples of Integrated Sustainable Lifestyles Initiatives | 13 |
| FOOD | 16 |
| MOBILITY | 22 |
| CONSUMER GOODS | 27 |
| HOUSING | 32 |
| LEISURE | 38 |
| GENERAL SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES | 42 |
| Share your Sustainable Lifestyles Initiatives: One Planet Network | 46 |

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication provides a sample of opportunities that can be tailored and applied at the city level to introduce and promote more sustainable lifestyles. Its aim is to enhance understanding of what are more sustainable ways of living and to raise awareness of what can be done, including actions inspired by efforts in the field.

The focus is on actions, campaigns and initiatives with high potential to reduce harmful ecological impacts through collective action taken by groups of individuals within neighbourhoods or through workplaces. Options focus on changing individual footprints and on changing the context within which people live, such as increasing biking infrastructure or shifting business practices to support reuse of consumer goods – thereby indirectly catalyzing the actions of decision-makers in public and private sectors.

The target audience is urban level intermediaries developing sustainable lifestyle initiatives and campaigns who have limited resources but are looking for maximum impacts to build a foundation for future efforts. Hence, options highlight lower effort actions to build momentum in the five key sustainable lifestyle domains – food, mobility, housing, consumer goods, and leisure – as well on sustainable lifestyles in general. This is not a comprehensive list but provides a sampling of activities to serve as inspiration.

Any city actor interested in advancing sustainable ways of living can find this document useful because it focuses on start-up efforts, and it can support building the capacity for deeper and more profound changes.

Please note the companion publication “Sustainable Lifestyles: Options and Opportunities through the Workplace,” is a list of actions that can be taken by employers (or employees) to support workers in their daily life practices (UN Environment, One Earth 2018).

Global Context and Methods

There is growing international interest and action on sustainable lifestyles. This publication is a UN Environment contribution to the One Planet Network on Sustainable Consumption and Production, specifically the One Planet Network Sustainable Lifestyles and Education programme.¹ In a broader context, it contributes to the 2030 agenda and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 – Target 8 which states ‘that by 2030 we ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.’

UN Environment acts as a secretariat and implementing partner of the One Planet Network. The One Planet Network is an implementation mechanism for Sustainable Development Goal 12, and multi-stakeholder partnerships that provides tools and solutions, and leads the shift to sustainable consumption and production. The One Planet Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme specifically addresses lifestyles and contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production.

The Ministry of Environment of the Government of Japan through the One Planet Network Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme financially supported this work as part of two related projects: 1) How emerging urban youth can be an engine for more low-carbon, sustainable lifestyles: beginning in Bogotá, Colombia²; and 2) Sustainable Lifestyles in the Workplace³. Each project worked at the urban level to promote the development of lifestyles initiatives and was based on



¹ www.twitter.com/SEIresearch; www.facebook.com/Lifestyles10YFP; www.scpclearinghouse.org/sustainable-lifestyles-and-education

² 'How emerging urban youth can be an engine for more low-carbon, sustainable lifestyles' www.oneplanetnetwork.org/initiative/how-emerging-urban-youth-can-be-engine-more-low-carbon-sustainable-lifestyles-beginning

³ 'Sustainable Lifestyles in the Workplace' www.oneplanetnetwork.org/initiative/sustainable-lifestyles-workplace-bogota-and-Marrakesh



global scoping studies of current efforts underway elsewhere. The scoping studies fed into the project activities to support local actors as they developed their own initiatives. The project teams contributed their experience on what was effective as well as the efforts they developed.

This listing of opportunities was prepared by combining case study and literature reviews, an analysis of ecological and carbon footprint data, and a synthesis of expert insights. In addition, the authors and UN Environment reached out to their network of global experts to share action ideas, insights and review drafts.

WHAT ARE SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES?

“To achieve sustainability, we need to make it easy, attractive and affordable for people everywhere to lead whole sustainable lifestyles – not just green buildings, but wider infrastructure and products and services as well.”

– SUE RIDDLESTONE AND POORAN DESAI, BIOREGIONAL, ONE PLANET LIVING

The practices and habits that make up our daily ways of living have ecological impacts and shape our economies and societies. Cities can play a critical role in transforming what we eat, how we live, how we move around, how we relax, and what we buy to become more sustainable.⁴ Sustainable ways of living are more complex than we may think and are not only about individual behaviour change.

There are many definitions of sustainable lifestyles, for example:

A “sustainable lifestyle” is a cluster of habits and patterns of behaviour embedded in a society and facilitated by institutions, norms and infrastructures that frame individual choice, in order to minimize the use of natural resources and generation of wastes, while supporting fairness and prosperity for all.⁴

Ultimately, minimizing natural resource use and waste production is not enough. Here is another definition that takes this into account:

Sustainability implies living well more equitably within the means of nature. Thus a “sustainable lifestyle” implies any pattern of individual consumption and social behaviour that could be shared by everyone while still maintaining ecological integrity; it is facilitated by institutions, social norms and infrastructures that frame individual choices and actions while ensuring that the aggregate rates of biophysical resource use and waste generation are within the regenerative and assimilative capacities of ecosystems.⁵

Research on promoting sustainable lifestyles and sustainable living practice highlights the following:

People do not intentionally set out to create harmful environmental impacts; these impacts are an unintended consequence of people’s efforts to fulfill their needs and aspirations.

Sustainable living is also about social justice and equity. Any meaningful discussion of sustainable lifestyles must address fair sharing of the world’s ecological and economic output and solutions.

It’s not only about the actions of individual people. Our everyday lives and behaviours are shaped by our context including:

- Identity, learned aspirations and expectations, social norms, and cultural influences;
- Culturally-shaped unconscious habits and practices; and
- Societal systems around us – including the physical layout of our neighbourhoods and cities, policies, markets, infrastructure, institutions, legal and financial systems, and cultural context.

There is no one universal sustainable lifestyle – sustainable ways of living can be as diverse as we are, provided we remain within the ecological capacities of natural ecosystems.

Nor are lifestyles static. They evolve with society, technological advances, and because of personal circumstances.

⁴ Source: Akenji, L, H. Chen et al. (2016). A framework for shaping sustainable lifestyles: Determinants and Strategies. United Nations Environment Programme

⁵ William E. Rees, 2018



Change is hampered by current media representations and urban myths around sustainability which imply that sustainability is complicated, an eco-niche and about being deprived, suffering, and paying more. The doom and gloom/idealistic approaches need to be replaced with actionable messages that are accessible, fun, irresistible, inspirational and/or cool. Accessible goes beyond how easy it is to get a point across – it also means that there should be targeted messages aimed at people with different levels of consumption – including those who do not have their basic needs met.

WHY DO PEOPLE CONSUME?

- To meet basic needs (e.g., nutrition and subsistence, health, housing, mobility);
- To fulfill social functions/expectations (e.g., convenience, connectedness, maintaining relationships, traditions);
- To 'advertise' personal social status and / or political and economic power;
- To satisfy personal desires, preferences and tastes (e.g., leisure, food preferences, consumer goods);
- In response to social media and advertising/marketing (e.g., creation of new product markets such as pet food and cosmetics, planned obsolescence, or enhanced functionality such as mobile phones that do more than make calls); and
- Because they have no choice (e.g., lock-in design of mobility infrastructure favours private car use or urban zoning laws and administrative procedures make urban agriculture difficult).

Adapted from: Akenji, L, H. Chen et al. (2016). A framework for shaping sustainable lifestyles: Determinants and Strategies. United Nations Environment Programme

PRIORITIZING ACTIONS TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

Transforming how we live our daily lives is essential for achieving global sustainability: living well and more equitably within the capacity of Earth's life support systems.

There are many sustainable lifestyles options – so how can we prioritize? We can start with the numbers: We are in global ecological overshoot. The annual demand of the human enterprise on our planet's resources exceeds what the Earth can produce in a year and there are not enough bio-resources and services to meet projected consumption demands. With climate change, natural resource depletion and scarcity, and growing waste, we need to focus on actions that drastically change the ecological footprints of our lifestyles.

A key priority is living our lives within our ecological means.

Based on ecological and carbon footprint data, we can identify priority lifestyles areas that contribute to ecological impacts. Consumption patterns dominate modern economies and consumer culture shapes our understanding of progress. Household consumption is "responsible for up to 60 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and between 50 and 80 percent of total land, material, and water use."⁶

Most impacts are in five lifestyle domains: food, mobility, housing, consumer goods, and leisure. Changes in these areas depend on individual behaviour and habit changes as well as contextual shifts – changes in the economic, social and cultural conditions and infrastructure that enable people to meet their needs and aspirations.

Sustainable living is also about better living for all. In many ways, these ecologically sustainable ways of living can be more attractive because they ensure ecological stability, provide hope for future generations and because they help individuals tap into common values such as belonging, security, joy, intergenerational care, and good health. In short, sustainable living can bring needs and aspirations more in line with ecological wellbeing.

⁶ Ivanova, D., Stadler, K., Steen-Olsen, K., Wood, R., Vita, G., Tukker, A. and Hertwich, E. G. (2016), Environmental Impact Assessment of Household Consumption. *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, 20: 526–536. doi:10.1111/jiec.12371

DEFINING LIFESTYLE IMPACTS: ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT DATA

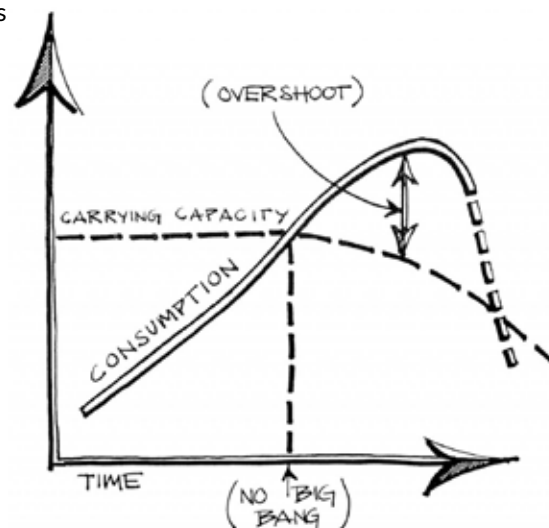
The world is in global ecological overshoot, consuming the equivalent of 1.5 times the resources and fossil energy our planet can sustainably produce. This means we are living by depleting essential 'natural capital' – soils, fish stocks, forests, etc. – the very definition of unsustainability. Achieving one-planet living implies an absolute reduction in energy/material use of about 50% even as population and incomes (consumption) increase.⁷

Though sustainability addresses social as well as ecological concerns, ecologically focused approaches to address impacts are the focus of this report. Work is needed, and piloting is underway, on broadening impact assessment to address social issues and lifestyles. As such, this publication focuses on environmental impacts, with social aspects noted where available.

Ecological footprint analysis was created by Dr. William E. Rees in the 1980s and further developed methodologically in the early 1990s with then PhD student, Dr Mathis Wackernagel.⁸ Wackernagel went on to found the Global Footprint Network, an invaluable resource for sustainability planners, policy developers and ordinary citizens dedicated to achieving sustainability.

Defining Ecological Footprint – The area of land and marine ecosystems we use to meet our material needs is called an "ecological footprint". More specifically, it is an estimate of the physical area of productive land and water ecosystems that an individual, population or activity requires to produce all the bio-resources it consumes and to absorb the (mostly carbon) waste it generates, using prevailing technology and resource management practices. Think of your personal ecological footprint as an index of your individual demand for nature's goods and services. Sometimes analysts refer to the 'ecological footprint' in its short form as 'eco-footprint', 'footprint' or its acronym, 'EF'.

Our carbon footprint is only one component of our ecological footprint. Carbon dioxide is the greatest waste product by weight of industrial/high-income countries and is active in the global carbon cycle. Ecological footprint analysis therefore accounts for carbon dioxide emissions in its calculations. While it is possible to estimate the footprints of individual production activities, the EF generally reflects final consumption, i.e., *population demand at the consumer level*.



Eco-footprint analysis enables us to maintain an **ecological balance sheet** because it is the currently available, commonly used sustainability indicator that facilitates the comparison of human demand with nature's supply. The method tracks the human exploitation of, and availability of, six categories of productive ecosystem: cropland, grazing land, fishing grounds, built-up land, forest area and carbon sink.

Because trade is global, an individual or country's footprint may include land or sea 'imported' from all over the world. We therefore usually report ecological footprints in global average hectares (gha) to reflect the average productivity of each ecosystem type.

The ability to compare consumer demand to available supply of biocapacity is one of the most important features of EF analysis. For example, a one planet ecological footprint implies an equal division of the total area of Earth's biologically productive land and water among the earth's human population. In 2014, **one-planet footprint** was 1.8 global hectares per capita and is now closer to 1.7 gha.⁹ The problem is that actual demand is the equivalent of 2.8 gha. The difference (65%) is

⁷ Moore, J. and W.E. Rees. Getting to One Planet Living. Chapter 4 in State of the World 2013 – Is Sustainability Still Possible? Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute.

⁸ Wackernagel, Mathis & Rees, William E. (1996) "Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth", New Society Press.

⁹ Global Footprint Network, 2014



a measure of ecological 'overshoot'; overshoot implies that the growth of the human enterprise is being financed, in part, by the depletion/liquidation of bio-resources essential to long term human survival.

Keep in mind that actions by individuals and community groups are not enough to achieve our goals. Sustainability is a collective problem that requires collective action, particularly by governments for the common good. Governments can, for example, implement consumption and carbon taxes and enable public transportation, efficient building energy use, and zero waste. Individuals can encourage governments to lead the way in creating a society, market and economy that is compatible with nature and the biophysical life-support services essential for human existence.

The ecological footprint assessment provides the core analytical lens for prioritizing and categorizing information for inclusion in this publication.



TABLE: CATEGORIZING ACTION AREAS ACCORDING TO EFFECTIVENESS AT REDUCING ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINTS

Carbon calculations and ecological footprint analysis highlight the following ‘more effective’ action areas for reducing the ecological impacts of lifestyle areas (see the second column).¹⁰ The table also identifies action areas that contribute in secondary ways (see the third column). The purpose of this table is to help you prioritize actions according to their level of effectiveness.

| LIFESTYLE DOMAINS / GENERAL | MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION AREAS | SECONDARY ACTION AREAS |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| FOOD | <p>Reduce wasted food at home and in the community</p> <p>Shift to plant-rich diets: eat more greens, seafood and white meat, and eat less red meat and dairy</p> | <p>Purchase from local farms</p> <p>Promote local seasonal vegetables and fruits</p> |
| MOBILITY | <p>Shift transportation modes to increase % of trips by walking, cycling and public transit</p> <p>Find alternatives to personal car ownership</p> <p>Reduce or eliminate the need to travel – both for long and short distances</p> | <p>Ensure car fleet / personal cars are operating efficiently</p> <p>Reduce emissions from idling personal vehicles</p> |
| CONSUMER GOODS | <p>Rethink buying decisions, for example, use services instead of owning goods</p> <p>Reduce use of high footprint materials: paper, plastics, textiles</p> <p>Reduce waste from consumer goods</p> | <p>Increase recycling and reuse of consumer goods</p> <p>Reduce toxins</p> |
| HOUSING | <p>Reduce housing energy needs: consider smaller dwellings and efficiency retrofits</p> <p>Support complete, compact communities</p> <p>Tackle building and construction waste</p> <p>Shift to more sustainable furnishings and appliances</p> | <p>Reduce ‘unnecessary’ water consumption</p> <p>Use fewer resources to run the home</p> |

¹⁰ The higher ecological impact actions identified in this table are derived from ecological footprint analysis and carbon footprint calculations, including the following studies: Moore, Jennie (2015) Ecological Footprints and Lifestyle Archetypes: Exploring dimensions of consumption and the transformation needed to achieve urban sustainability. *Sustainability*, 7, 4747-4763; Jennie Moore and William E Rees, “Getting to OnePlanet Living,” in Worldwatch Institute, State of the World 2013 (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2013); Lettenmeier M, Liedtke C, Rohn H (2014) Eight tons of material footprint – suggestion for a resource cap for household consumption in Finland. *Resources*, vol 3(3), pp. 488-515; Leppänen J, Neuvonen A, Ritola M, Ahola I, Hirvonen S, Hyötyläinen M, Kaskinen T, Kauppinen T, Kuittinen O, Kärki K, Lettenmeier M, Mokka R (2012) Scenarios for Sustainable Life styles 2050: From Global Champions to Local Loops, Report D4.1 Future Scenarios for New European Social Models with Visualisations of the Project SPREAD Sustainable Lifestyles 2050. Demos Helsinki, Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP).; Björk AE (2011) One Tonne Life? Greenhouse gas mitigation in a household perspective – a system approach. Chalmers University of Technology; Global Footprint Network 2017 – www.footprintnetwork.org



**LEISURE
(INCLUDING
TOURISM)**

Rethink how we celebrate and host events to be both meaningful and to have a low footprint

Promote sustainable recreation

Reduce the carbon footprint of holidays

Give your time to spend with others or to volunteer

Buy or craft eco-friendly (e.g., long-lasting, repairable) leisure goods and gifts

Use reusable dishware and decorations at events

Select an airline with green policies

GENERAL

Highlight wellbeing with lighter footprints

Create campaigns that celebrate a new good life vision

Reduce advertising pressure

Engage in collective groups like neighbourhoods and workplaces

Bring communities together for social connection and to create a sense of belonging

Engage in personal health practices such as mindfulness, meditation and yoga

Buy carbon offsets

Spend time in and connect with nature

THIS PUBLICATION: OPTIONS TO GET STARTED

LOWER EFFORT ACTIONS THAT ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE

Building on this table, the rest of this publication recommends actions that are lower effort and more effective at reducing ecological footprints. As noted above, the target audience for this list of options is urban level intermediaries who are developing sustainable lifestyle initiatives and campaigns. It is aimed at those who have limited resources (money, time and influence) and who are looking to get started in an impactful way and build a foundation for future efforts.

Some actions are **direct** and can be introduced by initiative leaders themselves, and others are **indirect** and aim to stimulate, promote and catalyze action in more influential stakeholders such as governments, businesses and institutions.

DON'T STOP WITH THESE ACTIONS – KEEP GOING AND INVEST MORE IN ACTIONS THAT TRIGGER BIGGER, BOLDER CHANGE

These first efforts can catalyze the conversation, kickstart momentum and move things in the right direction; however, they are not enough to transition completely to sustainable lifestyles. Each section concludes with examples of higher investment actions that require relatively more money, time, influence or other resources.

Deeper medium and long term changes are needed for policy, institutions, infrastructure, economic systems, business models, and cultural practices to foster sustainable ways of living. Lower effort actions provide straightforward entry points and establish a foundation on which to build these bolder necessary transformative actions.



DISCLAIMER: THIS REPORT IS NOT A COMPLETE LIST OF OPTIONS – PLEASE ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS!

This is a sample of actions – it is not comprehensive! It is meant to inspire initiative development around the world. Feel welcome to adapt, identify and develop other ideas.

A few tips and principles to keep in mind...



Start conversations with people you know.

Exchanging ideas and getting people thinking about the impact of their relationships with food, transport, goods, housing, leisure and personal wellbeing in their daily lives helps better understand the context for change and what can be done. You may find that you already have **more allies than you expect!**



Identify where you have influence.

Your stakeholders or target audience could be your community, neighbourhood, school, policy-makers, chefs, park rangers, children, dog-owners, librarians, parents, seniors' homes, immigrants, hospital staff, educators, students – identify your groups and engage them!



Engage and accommodate diversity in lifestyles.

From the start, reach out to the community and target groups in participatory, relevant and grounded ways. Orient around people's needs and wants, build trust and promote actions that are linked to a sense of place and local context. Engage a diverse range of stakeholders and reflect the diversity in ways of living.



Build on existing initiatives. Join with others.

In creating a campaign/initiative, see where you can build on your strengths, your existing work and networks.

- What else is happening in your city? Are there neighbourhood programmes you can build on?
- Which institutions are you connected to, e.g., schools, hotels?
- What non-financial resources can you draw on for support through partners?



Combine actions across domains and general sustainable lifestyles areas.

Take an integrated approach to sustainable lifestyles by connecting actions across domains as well as by working towards more systemic change.




Focus on aspirations and better living.

Create a compelling vision based on stakeholder values. Be clear about the problem but place greater emphasis on how more sustainable lifestyle choices can lead to better lives.



Measure impact: set clear goals and demonstrate sustainability results.

Set achievable ecological, social, and economic goals and outline clear milestones for measuring progress along the way. Clarify how people can contribute in meaningful ways.



*** Leverage initial actions to pursue bigger, bolder actions.**

Use the lower effort actions to facilitate the higher investment actions to shift habits, practices, infrastructure and the social, political, economic and cultural context for more sustainable ways of living.

*** Be responsive and learn as you go.**

Create a culture of learning by listening to participants throughout the life of an initiative, sharing feedback to motivate further action, and adapting initiatives over time.

For more guidance on fostering and communicating sustainable lifestyles see this [UN Environment report](#).

ADOPT A CONNECTED APPROACH

EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES INITIATIVES

Below are examples of initiatives that take an integrated approach. For example, you can link efforts to advance food and mobility, or increase wellbeing while also addressing consumer goods, or create an initiative that advances sustainable lifestyles holistically in all their richness. Keep in mind that you can tailor options to adapt to unique situations and local context.

One Planet Living Initiative: Supporting sustainable living in local communities around the world

One Planet Living is a sustainable living initiative and framework created by Bioregional, a UK-based charity and social enterprise. Rooted in the science of ecological and carbon footprinting, the aim of the One Planet Living initiative is to support people around the world to live happy, healthy lives within their fair share of the earth's resources, leaving space for wildlife and wilderness. Based on ten simple principles of sustainability it was created out of the strategies used for the development of the BedZED eco-village in the UK in 2002, which Bioregional initiated and where Bioregional's London office is based. Today, there are One Planet communities, destinations, and companies across Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, and Australia. Bioregional has endorsed their One Planet Action Plans as representing exemplary responses to the challenges of One Planet Living. The communities range from the Villages Nature Paris, a major new low-carbon tourist destination on the outskirts of Paris to the community of Elmsbrook in North West Bicester eco-town, developed by A2Dominion. They also include the UK's leading home improvement and garden retailer B&Q, which became a One Planet Company in 2007.



THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF ONE PLANET LIVING ARE:

1. Health and happiness
2. Equity and local economy
3. Culture and community
4. Land and nature

5. Sustainable water
6. Local and sustainable food
7. Travel and transport
8. Materials and products
9. Zero waste
10. Zero carbon energy

>> **More at:** www.bioregional.com

Edukatu – Brazil: Educating for lifestyle change – Learning network on conscious consumption and sustainability for educators and students (age 6 to 15).

Edukatu was the first learning network, in Brazil, on conscious consumption and sustainability. It offers a free on-line platform for teachers and 6 to 15 year-old students in public schools to voluntarily adhere to a learning process which is fun for students and rigorous for teachers. It provides multimedia contents for them to engage in educational activities and exchange knowledge. It helps students to understand the value of empathy and to use acts of consumption to positively transform the environment and society when buying, using and discarding products or services. This technological, dynamic, collaborative and non-hierarchical proposal is complemented by challenges with awards offered to teachers and students to stimulate dialogic educational processes, autonomy of the students and mobilization of the school community. The platform has 65,000 page views and 14,000 unique visitors per month (average for 2016). At least 6,000 teachers and 22,000 students in 2,800 schools are registered and directly engaged with the project.

>> **More at:** bit.ly/2op8NNJ

Sitra – Sustainable Everyday Life initiative – Finland working with its citizens

With its mission to support being able to live a good life within the earth's carrying capacity, Sitra's Resource-wise citizen effort promotes change in two ways: by inspiring more sustainable choices in everyday life and by helping companies develop more competitive sustainable products and services. By carrying out different experiments, the Sitra team inspires people to enjoy better and more sustainable lives. They analyse how Finns are behaving now and how prepared they are to change their habits. In addition, they collect information on the impact of everyday life on the environment so that the information can be used to encourage change within social circles. Sitra helps small and large companies develop their sustainable consumer businesses and assists them in partnering to launch new kinds of innovations and co-operation. In addition, they host company events in which they focus on business models and new trends in consumer behaviour in the world. Sitra has a free [workbook](#) with tools that practitioners can use to foster ecologically sustainable consumer behaviour. Its companion [report](#) outlines the SHIFT framework, with principles drawn from behavioural science (marketing, psychology, economics, etc.) that can be leveraged to shift consumer attitudes, choices and behaviours.



>> **More at:** www.sitra.fi/en/topics/sustainable-everyday-life/#latest

GetGreen VN – Sustainable Living and Working in Vietnam

In Vietnam several projects focus on delivering more sustainable products to both export and local markets. However, since there are no similar projects in the country, it is important to raise consumer awareness of sustainable products to enhance the demand for sustainability. The main target groups are consumer groups and office workers groups. Through raising awareness, training and education the goal is to create change agents.



Activities include:

1. Core materials and an information infrastructure;
2. GetGreen Guidebook;
3. Change Agent Training material (for 3-day training);
4. Web-based information and interaction tools;
5. Civil society organization capacity building / change agent training in two 3-day training workshops;
6. Creating a 'pool' of 1,000 individuals via 50 GetGreen consumer groups to act as change agents in their direct living and/or working environments; and
7. Implementation workshops, meetings and networking activities for the 50 GetGreen group.

>> **More at:** www.switch-asia.eu/projects/getgreen-vn/ and www.switch-asia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/38_getgreen-VN.pdf

The Global Ecovillage Network

The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) is an association of five regional networks representing 10,000 ecovillages from every region of the globe. These ecovillages are intentional communities structured around five dimensions of sustainability – social, culture, ecology, economy, and whole systems design. GEN communities are living laboratories for sustainable living, experimenting with innovative ways of integrating sustainable living into rural and urban environments. The communities are distributed across the social and economic landscape, from traditional villages to rural and urban communities. The Network facilitates the sharing of best practices and knowledge across and between regions through its five regional networks: GENOA (Oceania and Asia); GENNA (North America); CASA (Latin America); GEN Europe (Europe); and GEN Africa (Africa).

>> **More at:** www.ecovillage.org

LET'S BUILD THE MOVEMENT

We invite you to test, adapt, and improve the actions identified in this publication. Add your own sustainable lifestyles interventions to create entirely new initiatives and campaigns within and across domains. Let's build a growing movement of actors coming together to make sustainable living a global reality.



FOOD

*Enjoy eating while tackling food waste
and shifting to plant-rich diets*

BASED ON ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT AND CARBON FOOTPRINT DATA, PRIORITIZE THESE AREAS:



MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION AREAS



Reduce wasted food at home and in the community
Shift to plant-rich diets: eat less red meat and dairy

SECONDARY ACTION AREAS

Purchase from local farms
Promote local seasonal vegetables and fruits

Within each of these areas, actions range from lower effort – simple and quicker – to ones that require more investment of money, time or other resources. **Lower effort actions** are the focus of this publication and help move things in the right direction. Combine these actions together and build momentum to work on bigger and deeper changes! These actions complement, but do not replace **higher effort actions** that are needed for medium and long-term changes in policy, institutions, infrastructure, economic systems, business models, and cultural practices. Examples of higher effort actions that foster sustainable ways of living appear at the end of the section.

MORE EFFECTIVE, LOWER EFFORT ACTIONS

Here are a few ideas to shift food impacts and to get the conversation and action started in higher impact areas. These are relatively fast and easy ways to kickstart a shift towards more sustainable food choices:

- 1** **Prevent wasted food at home and in the community**
- 2** **Rescue food that would otherwise go to waste**
- 3** **Encourage cultural shifts around leftover food**
- 4** **Change food serving styles to smaller sized meals and portions and on-demand meals in restaurants and food services**
- 5** **Measure how much food is being wasted – and find opportunities to save food**
- 6** **Get food out of the garbage through composting**
- 7** **Share food with neighbours**
- 8** **Raise food safety awareness including expiry dates**
- 9** **Help individuals and families take steps towards eating more greens, seafood and white meat, and eating less red meat and dairy**
- 10** **Support menu changes at hotels and restaurants toward plant-rich diets**



Use the list below to identify with a tick mark the actions you are prioritizing!

Reduce wasted food at home and in the community

1 Prevent wasted food at home and in the community

- Circulate a pledge to reduce wasted food at home to raise awareness of the scale of the challenge**
e.g., FoodShift's [pledge](#); the Global Footprint Network's [food waste pledge](#).
- Support people to plan meals and shop smart**
Making a weekly meal plan and using it when shopping reduces food waste significantly. One example is [Plan to Eat's](#) menu planner and shopping list generator. [Think.Eat.Save](#) also gives tips on ways to save money and food.
- Educate others about how to store food properly**
Many people are nervous about how long food can be stored, or whether they are storing it properly. [Love Food Hate Waste](#) has created helpful guides to meet this need.
- Share information about local food and local food markets**
Provide information on location and hours of operation, as well as information about which foods are available in which seasons. Offer recipes on how to prepare less familiar foods.
- Organize a competition or challenge to reduce food waste**
This could be between workplaces, across restaurants, or in your neighbourhood. It could be issued by a high-profile person in the community, e.g., the Nashville Mayor's [Food Saver Challenge](#).
- Write or meet with your grocery store or local restaurant**
Find out what they are doing to reduce their food waste. What are they doing with surplus food? How are they getting food near its expiry date to a good home? Let them know these issues matter to you. Give recognition for good practices. You can connect them with the [Too Good to Go app](#) to sell their surplus food at discounted prices at the end of the day.
- Encourage people to be careful when they brew or prepare tea or coffee to minimize how much is thrown down the drain**
Brew just enough coffee for the number of people. The footprint of coffee, tea and cocoa is high relative to its weight.
- Encourage Zero Waste plans/movements**
They could be proposed as a challenge for a neighbourhood, school or workplace.
- Encourage more cooking from scratch as a family and/or neighbourhood activity**
This could take the shape of a "cooking from scratch" day.

2 Rescue food that would otherwise go to waste

- Encourage urban/community gardening**
A community garden helps people gain more knowledge about food and food waste. It also brings people together, e.g., in workplaces, it can become a part of a teambuilding exercise.
- Engage people in your neighbourhood to harvest extra food being grown on trees and in gardens**
For example, encourage neighbours to donate excess food (e.g., fruit) for processing and use by those in need; recruit volunteers to harvest / collect donated food and deliver it to a non-profit or to residents in need of food assistance.



IMAGE: VADIM L. UNSPLASH

- Start a "Share Table" at school cafeterias or workplaces**
Share Tables redistribute unopened, unserved food to coworkers and/or pupils and start conversations (and awareness) around wasted food.
- Consider a local app that connects people with restaurant or street food at a discount before closing time**
See the [11th Hour](#), an app set up by a food stall vendor with discounted menu items offered by restaurants and food stalls in Singapore before they close. It has been downloaded 10,000 times since last year's (2017) launch. This and other apps tackling food waste can be found [here](#).
- Support restaurants and hotels to explore how they can redirect excess food**
Find end-users for commonly wasted foods like baked goods and share case studies.
- Promote an app that lets neighbours share food**
With the [OLIO app](#), users create an account and upload a picture and a short description of the food they want to give away, from bananas to fresh herbs to lactose-free baby powder. They can contact each other via private messages to arrange for pick-

ups, either at home or in a public place for the more privacy-conscious. At OLIO, there is also a section to exchange non-food items, such as clothes and furniture.

○ **Rethink what is considered food, and what is considered waste**

This includes changing thinking about parts of vegetables and fruits such as carrot tops and citrus peels, as well as animal products such as whey. It also includes food that doesn't look perfect because of a blemish, size, or other feature (so-called "ugly" produce). A South African [campaign website](#) uses the hashtag #DemandUgly to put pressure on supermarkets.



○ **Pilot a community fridge programme in partnership with local hotels / restaurants, where fridges are placed in public locations so residents can access leftover or surplus food**

For example, the [Versova Welfare Association](#) (India) installed fridges across Mumbai where individuals and food service businesses can deposit excess or fresh food that is then accessible to the underprivileged.

3 Encourage cultural shifts around leftover food

○ **Focus an awareness campaign on reusable containers for leftover food**

This includes bringing glass containers to restaurants and having reusable containers in house for storing leftovers. Food services can also play a role by offering customers containers for their leftovers.

○ **If taking leftover food home from restaurants is considered a social faux pas...**

Open discussions to shift attitudes about restaurant leftovers.

○ **Start a conversation around "leftovers" as "food" rather than "waste"**

Increase knowledge of what people can do with leftovers, e.g., the [Love Your Leftovers](#) app started in 2013 and is now being used in hundreds of countries, e.g., Uganda, China, Jordan and Norway.

4 Change food serving styles to smaller sized meals and portions and on-demand meals in restaurants and food services

○ **Encourage restaurants to charge for excess food left on the individual's plate**

This could also be done when serving buffet-style or on large platters.

○ **Encourage hotels to move away from buffet service and towards plate service**

Encourage them to freeze food or use frozen meats to avoid spoilage.

○ **Start an education and awareness campaign around appropriate portion sizes**

For more on portion size: [Huffington Post](#), [Love Food Hate Waste](#). Build on national dietary standards and tap into people's health interests.

○ **Educate about the impact of waste**

Using comparisons and metaphors (e.g., [BEACN Food Waste calculator](#) compares with kms driven in a car) can be very helpful.

○ **Encourage hotels and restaurants to serve food on smaller plates and bowls**

This makes it easier to serve appropriate portions sizes while still presenting a dish to guests. This includes individual servings, as well as shared dishes.

5 Measure how much is being wasted – and find opportunities to save food

○ **Challenge hotels or restaurants to start using food tracking apps or software**


For example, [LeanPath](#) (software) or [MintScraps](#) (an app used by restaurants in the US and Thailand to track and monitor their food waste in real time).

○ **Conduct a waste audit for a week in a school cafeteria or restaurant**

Audits can show potential for savings and keep motivations high. They can be done regularly to track progress. For a quick guide on how to conduct a waste audit on a food service business, see, e.g., [FoodSave](#).

○ **Circulate the materials for individuals to conduct a home waste audit**

For a guide on how to conduct a home waste audit see the [Green Bloc toolkit](#). This can become a neighbourhood challenge with prizes given to families who reduce their household food waste the most in subsequent audits.

 *Measure impact and celebrate success along the way!*

6 **Get food out of the garbage through composting**

○ Educate people in your neighbourhood about the value of composting

For example, providing fertilizer for home gardens or local agriculture.

○ Increase the ability of residents to compost on-site or in their own backyards

For example, distribute information on how to do backyard composting in buckets.

○ Help make food waste collection more visible


Try placing small waste bins close to where employees / students circulate in workplaces or schools.

○ Install a small or mid-size composter

This is useful especially if there is not a city-wide green waste / compost pickup service and can also fill gaps in an existing pick-up system.

○ Encourage small and medium-sized companies, families to engage with composting or garbage segregation services that exist locally

Sometimes green waste is exchanged for humus, or credit points. This can include developing or encouraging the establishment of compost pick-up services on a non-profit or for-profit basis. These has been very successful in London.

 *Keep going! Take on bigger and bolder action.*

○ Teach people about vermiculture, where worms eat compost

This can be more suitable to apartments, workplaces or schools.

○ Close the loop by bringing resulting compost into community gardens

This also works in community plots for vegetables.



7 **Share food with neighbours**

○ Start a dinner co-op where neighbours swap meals with each other

Agree to provide “prepared meals for each other on a schedule” (tips [here](#)). A one-month trial is a good idea: try a challenge among friends to set up a co-op in their neighbourhood or residence and blog about their experience.

○ Start conversations around preparing “just enough food” for shared meals where everyone contributes a dish

When the tendency is to share an overabundance of food, lead by example by planning a menu in advance, asking guests to confirm their attendance so that the right number of portions are prepared, and similar actions.

8 **Raise food safety awareness including expiry dates**

○ Organize learning sessions about food safety, including what expiry dates and best-before dates mean

This can be a webinar, a community center workshop, or a school visit. Check out [EatByDate](#) for an informative perspective on food shelf life, safety, recipes, and more.

○ Make use of social media to start a food safety awareness campaign

The campaign could share best practices as well as promote food safety conferences or relevant training programmes.

Shift to plant-rich diets

Eat more greens, seafood and white meat, and eat less red meat and dairy

9 **Help individuals and families take steps towards eating more greens, seafood and white meat, and eating less red meat and dairy**

○ Promote a pledge by individuals to eat a more plant-rich diet

For example, Meatless Mondays with students (one meatless meal a week). Alternative campaigns: becoming Reducetarian (less meat in the week), VB6 (eat vegan before 6pm – the dinner meal) or a [climatarian](#). This can include a vegetarian day of the week at the workplace.

○ Start a challenge to prioritize plant-based proteins and white meat


Replacing red meat with plant-based proteins like beans and pulses, or white meat (e.g., poultry) can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of meals at home or at work.

○ Educate the public about sustainable seafood choices

These choices are context specific and mean choosing seafood that has been caught or farmed in a way that ensures the long-term viability of the species and the marine ecosystem. Ecolabels provide information and include [Marine Stewardship Council's](#) global ecolabel and fisheries certification; there are also local or national labels and guides for consumers. The wellbeing of fisheries-dependent communities should be taken into account.



- **Start a challenge to consume less dairy**
Promote alternatives like almond / oat / soy / coconut milk or tofu (to make dips). Like red meat, dairy farming has a large ecological footprint.
- **Recruit an individual to participate in a food challenge / pledge and blog about their experience**
The blog can be shared with online networks as well as local media to raise awareness.
- **Support networks of restaurants that promote more sustainable diets**
- **Support school programming to learn about sustainable ingredients and eating more greens;**
Replace vending machines with pop or candy with other income providing initiatives for schools.
- **Change the food environment by creating festivals, markets or other spaces focused on more sustainable and plant-rich diets**
- **Disseminate information about seasonal fruits and vegetables**
Celebrate and enjoy plant-rich diets aligned with the seasons.
- **Focus on health and social connectedness in campaigns**
Go beyond a sustainability focus; and consider other dimensions that people care about like well being, health, and developing a sense of community.

 *Celebrate people and culture through food!*

- **Encourage more plant-rich cooking from scratch and participation in urban gardening**
These are ways to shift food growing and cooking practices toward eating more greens.

10 Support menu changes at hotels and restaurants toward plant-rich diets

- **Encourage restaurants and food services to offer low-carbon meals on menus**
No need to label meals as such for customers. Make dishes enticing!
- **Start an Instagram campaign to showcase plant-rich alternatives**
What about veggie burgers or vegan dishes? Help make them popular. Encourage local champions / celebrities to use their own social media channels.
- **Promote restaurants that offer low-carbon meal options on their menus**

 *Find allies in your community.*


- **Have at least one vegetarian (and/or vegan) meal available once a week**
Consider commitments like Meatless Mondays.
- **Suggest that businesses / hotels start a weekly fruit basket for employees**
Consider also a “take a vegetable home” day to encourage healthy eating at home.
- **Reduce the proportion of red meat in dishes**
Create new kinds of burgers made with mixes of other ingredients like mushrooms.

THE NEXT LEVEL

HIGHER EFFORT ACTIONS

You’ve taken lower effort and easier to implement actions and are ready to take things to the next level. There are many actions that require more effort but have greater and more significant ecological returns. Consider the proven actions below building on your now expanded network of sustainable lifestyles allies. You have a good opportunity to take on larger projects, exchange ideas, and work together.

Here are some examples:

-  **Promote Meatless Monday challenges with a broader range of actors such as at schools, restaurants, and workplaces**



Once you have experience with this type of lifestyle change in your own community, you can expand coverage and encourage businesses and institutions to join. The knowledge you have gained enables you to speak from experience including highlighting associated benefits.

Support grocery stores, cafeterias, sports teams to try out meat alternatives in addition to – or instead of – the usual fare

This can include vegetarian delicatessen selections alongside the smoked chicken for lunch. For example, in the USA, several sports concession stands offer alternatives to the standard burger such as black-bean patties.

Consider actions that reduce processed food

This is because of the high ecological footprint of food processing.

Rescue food by setting up direct connections between hotels, restaurants, grocers, and non-profits that serve food (e.g., food banks), event managers or individuals

Redistributing or ‘repurposing’ unsold and surplus food from businesses to those in need can have a significant impact on food waste while supporting the community. Facilitating the connection between non-profits and businesses in the food industry may require navigating local bylaws. This action builds on the experience gained from rescuing food that would be wasted from community gardens and fruit trees and directing it toward those in need.

Note that reducing wasted food, shifting to more plant-based diets and white meats, and reducing red meat and dairy consumption have significantly higher footprint reduction potential than targeting food transportation and increasing local food production.

OTHER STARTING POINTS

The following actions do not have as high a footprint impact as those listed above; however, they can have other benefits such as building community and a sense of connection with the natural world.

For example:

Encourage purchasing from local farms, especially of seasonal vegetables and fruits

This includes purchasing from farmers markets, community-supported agriculture and delivered organics boxes. Promoting diets that include locally grown vegetables and fruits that are in season supports local agriculture and reduces the carbon footprint associated with transporting food and supports small-holder farms and the local agricultural community. Expand the reach and number more sustainable food options like organic food fairs by using public spaces (e.g., public squares, university campuses, school playgrounds) – and share through social media. This action can work hand-in-hand with efforts like the Meatless Monday challenge. One can also encourage the development of hyper local options for vegetables and protein, for example, by facilitating backyard chicken coops for both fresh eggs and white meat.

** Build on what’s already out there!*



MOBILITY

*Getting around more sustainably and
reducing the need for travel*

BASED ON ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT AND CARBON FOOTPRINT DATA, PRIORITIZE THESE AREAS:



MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION AREAS



- Shift transportation modes to increase the % of trips by walking, cycling and public transit**
- Find alternatives to personal car ownership**
- Reduce or eliminate the need to travel – both for long and short distances**

SECONDARY ACTION AREAS

- Ensure car fleet / personal cars are operating efficiently**
- Reduce emissions from idling personal vehicles**

Within each of these areas, actions range from lower effort – simple and quicker – to ones that require more investment of money, time or other resources. **Lower effort actions** are the focus of this publication and help move things in the right direction. Combine these actions together and build momentum to work on bigger and deeper changes! These actions complement, but do not replace **higher effort actions** that are needed for medium and long-term changes in policy, institutions, infrastructure, economic systems, business models, and cultural practices. Examples of higher effort actions that foster sustainable ways of living appear at the end of the section.

LOWER EFFORT / MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION AREAS

Here are a few ideas to shift mobility impacts and to get the conversation and action started in higher impact areas. These are relatively fast and easy ways to kickstart a shift towards more sustainable mobility choices:

- 1 Increase the use of public transport**
- 2 Understand the walkability of the community**
- 3 Take actions to improve the biking infrastructure in the community**
- 4 Make walking corridors more appealing**
- 5 Develop alternatives to driving for short distance trips (e.g., walking, cycling)**
- 6 Increase transit ridership for commuting**
- 7 Promote participation in carshare, carpool and ride-share programmes for shared commuting**
- 8 Celebrate International Car-Free Day, World Bicycle Day and World Cycling Day**
- 9 Reduce the need for long-distance travel**
- 10 Reduce the number of people commuting**



Use the list below to identify with a tick mark the actions you are prioritizing!

Shift transportation modes to increase the % of trips by walking, cycling and public transit

1 Increase the use of public transport

Increase the comfort and safety of bus stops

This includes advocating for the construction of covered areas as bus stops to provide shade and shelter from rain; and lighting and alarm systems to provide security.

Promote the installation of bike racks on public transport

Support the creation of real-time public transit tracking

That makes transit easier to use and plan around. This could include upgrading online information or feeding city transit information through apps such as [CityMapper](#).

2 Understand the walkability of the community

Conduct an audit of the walkability of the community or of a neighbourhood to improve transportation options

For example, see the [AARP's survey toolkit](#), and the [ITDP walkability toolkit](#). The audit would include information on location and distances between community amenities and any public health or safety risks.



Promote a walkability index for homes being sold

Partner with groups like realtors to feature the walkability of neighbourhoods. An example of a web-based walkability index is [WalkScore](#).

Create or use apps that map out safe routes for women and children to walk to school

For example, see the [Malalai app](#) from Brazil.

3 Take actions to improve the biking infrastructure in the community

Conduct an audit of the bike-ability of the community or of a neighbourhood

The audit can be used to improve transportation options, e.g., see [AARP's survey toolkit](#).

Measure and celebrate progress.

Organize campaigns for improved biking conditions

Respect from drivers and more bike paths can have a significant impact on the safety of bike transit. In Brazil, a white bike in the form of a Christian cross is placed wherever an accident has taken place to raise awareness.

Map the organizations already active in the bicycle mobility space

Support efforts for these organizations to collaborate. Where there are branding opportunities, support companies to become visible champions. In Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre, business branding of bike sharing schemes contributes to financial sustainability.

Illuminate bike paths

Create a movement to encourage local government to install street lamps and reflectors on the road.

Encourage workplaces, schools and universities to include bike infrastructure and incentives

This could include changing rooms, secure and sufficient bike parking (e.g., racks or bike lockers), as well as free or discounted bike locks.

Encourage workplaces, such as hotels, to give employees who bike a mask against pollution

See, e.g., this [top 5 list](#) from the Independent, including one designed for use in China.

Make bike paths visible

Create a movement to encourage local government to clearly mark bike paths on the road. This can be achieved with brightly colored lanes on the side of the road or having bike lanes separated from traffic by pylons or trees.

Work with a university, city or neighbourhood to make a road available to bikes on a temporary basis


On weekends, many cities dedicate exclusive lanes for recreational biking using typical car-based lanes, thus enabling a biking culture and increasing the visibility of biking as a mode of leisure as well as transport.



IMAGE: © ASSOCIATION MAWARID - BY MOHAMED SAAD

4 Make walking corridors more appealing

- **Create points of interest along walking corridors**
This includes installing public art; placing benches and picnic tables nearby; and creating gardens and playgrounds. These can be temporary or permanent.
- **Communicate the individual and city benefits of mobility by foot**
This could be an awareness campaign on social media, with challenges and prizes for participants.
- **Enhance the safety and enjoyment of walking corridors**
This can be achieved through increased lighting or creating barriers between footpaths and automobile traffic.

 *Prioritizing walking and biking shifts travel patterns: it's powerful to combine these actions.*

Find alternatives to personal car ownership

5 Develop alternatives to driving for short distance trips (e.g., walking, cycling)

- **Start a walking school bus programme**
This is when children are walked to school by a coordinated set of parents or guardians.
- **Teach bicycle skills**
Hold a workshop to teach people about different bicycle skills including road safety and bike maintenance.

○ Raise awareness of bicycle safety

Work with local regulators to include bicycle awareness and safety in driver training programmes.

○ Encourage local businesses, libraries, apartments, schools, etc. to install bike racks

This can be done on their property for those who switch modes, e.g., from bike to bus.

○ Educate drivers to respect bicycle riders

○ Create maps or an app showing the walking, cycling, and transit routes between residential areas and commercial centres

These maps can highlight the ease of multi-modal transport and draw attention to safety issue as well as points of interest along routes. A good example of such an app is [CityMapper](#).

6 Increase transit ridership for commuting

○ Encourage employers to provide support like transit passes to employees

In Brazil, transit tickets are recognized as a benefit to employees and not taxed.

7 Promote participation in carshare, carpool and ride-share programmes for shared commuting

○ Start a carpool or ride-share programme

Where carpool programmes do not exist, work with existing networks to develop a platform to connect workers and students looking to share a commute. This can take place online through social media.

○ Work with employers (especially large ones) to support carpooling

This can be done by providing preferential parking privileges to employees participating in carpool programmes.

○ Spread the word about existing carpool programmes or online platforms

Provide co-workers and students with information about carpool programmes. Use apps to connect with rideshare services. For example, [Carpool World](#) matches worldwide users for free to share rides for daily commutes or one-time trips. A carpool group can also sign up for free, e.g., a workplace. There's a paid service for organizations, events or workplaces which tracks the carbon footprint and has additional features.

○ Encourage local governments and social or business associations to publicly recognize and encourage shared commuting initiatives

○ Advocate to reduce parking spaces in the city

This includes adjustments to the proportion of parking spaces per resident in multi-family buildings.

○ Challenge individuals to share their experiences with rideshare services

Use blogging or sharing on social media. Note that ridesharing is distinct from ride-sourcing (e.g., Uber, Lyft) as rideshares are pre-existing trips in which the driver takes additional passengers.

8

Celebrate International Car-Free Day, World Bicycle Day and World Cycling Day

- Celebrate international Car-Free Day on 22 September
This could include closing down central city streets to traffic for one day or hosting a car-free festival with food and music. This has gone global, with Bogotá holding the “world’s largest car-free weekday event covering the entire city” (Wiki).
- Celebrate the **World Bicycle Day** on 3 June or **World Cycling Day** on 17 September

Reduce or eliminate the need to travel – both for long and short distances

9 Reduce the need for long-distance travel

- Encourage workplaces to install virtual conference facilities
Ask companies and libraries to make facilities available to non-profits or others seeking to host meetings without flying.
- Try using conferencing software and programmes
Give teleconferencing programmes such as Skype or Zoom a trial run to replace in-person meetings.
- Support inexpensive or free cross-country calling for business or pleasure
Staying in touch via telephone (or WhatsApp) can reduce the need to travel frequently to visit friends and family, or to work collaboratively.
- Develop a program to encourage (or require) business travel by train, ferry or bus as an alternative to flights for longer-distance travel when possible.

10 Reduce the number of people commuting

- Promote working from home one or more days a week with local employers
This can reduce commuting time (and often increase wellbeing and flexibility for the employee). In places where traffic congestion is an issue, an alternative is shifted start / finish times to reduce the length of commuting time.



Share how more sustainable choices lead to better living.

- Support flexi-time programmes as a way to reduce car use
Encourage workplaces and schools to implement flexible starting times of the workday or school programmes to allow people to use alternative transportation. Flexi-time has been shown to reduce both emissions and commuting times.
- Encourage the provision of bicycles in hotels

THE NEXT LEVEL

HIGHER EFFORT ACTIONS

You’ve taken lower effort and easier to implement actions and are ready to take things to the next level. There are many actions that **require more effort but have greater and more significant ecological returns**. The actions listed below build on the experience and knowledge gained by pursuing some of the above actions. Additionally, it is likely that your network of sustainable lifestyles allies has expanded because of your activities. This presents a great opportunity to take on larger projects, exchange ideas, and work together with partners on actions that take more effort and resources.

Here are some examples:

Promote or start car-sharing programmes


Residents can access a fleet of vehicles on a needs basis, e.g., [car2go](#), Zip Car ([Canada](#), [Costa Rica](#)), or [carmine](#) in Morocco. Encourage local programmes that offer preferential parking as part of the support system by businesses or government.

Advocate for an integrated transit programme and aligned land use and transportation planning

Encourage local government and transit authorities to develop a transit strategy that integrates walking, cycling, bus, carpool taxi programmes, and metro services. This can include infrastructure projects such as creating dedicated bike lanes or enhancing the connectivity across existing bike lanes; creating and expanding walking paths; and redesigning or enhancing public transit corridors to make use of less congested routes. Transit authorities may also develop a payment programme that allows users to pay for all public transit options with a single pass. See [Shared Use Mobility Center](#) for many useful resources and webinars.






 *Leverage initial actions to pursue bigger, bolder actions!*

Even though infrastructure projects are more complex and take time and significant resources to materialize, there are many low-effort, low-impact actions that can be taken around sustainable mobility. Tackling issues around personal and fleet car maintenance, and idling are two excellent places to start. The following actions do not have as high an ecological footprint impact as those listed above; however, they provide a starting point for individuals and organizations seeking to live more sustainable lifestyles and can have other benefits such as building community and a sense of connection with the natural world.

Here are some examples:

 **Ensure that personal and fleet cars are operating efficiently**

Encourage regular maintenance of cars – whether fleet vehicles or personal vehicles – through education campaigns, discounts, maintenance schedules. This helps to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases from cars by ensuring that car systems and filters are working properly.

 **Reduce emissions from idling personal vehicles**

Start a campaign to encourage drivers to turn their cars off rather than letting the engine run idle. This may include turning off the engine while waiting in drive-thrus, at traffic lights, or long queues for services such as ferry travel.



CONSUMER GOODS

Living Lighter: use and waste less, share more

BASED ON ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT AND CARBON FOOTPRINT DATA, PRIORITIZE THESE AREAS:



MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION AREAS



Rethink buying decisions, for example, use services instead of owning goods

Reduce use of high footprint materials: paper, plastics, textiles

Reduce waste from consumer goods

SECONDARY ACTION AREAS

Increase recycling and reuse of consumer goods

Reduce toxins

Within each of these areas, actions range from lower effort – simple and quicker – to ones that require more investment of money, time or other resources. **Lower effort actions** are the focus of this publication and help move things in the right direction. Combine these actions together and build momentum to work on bigger and deeper changes! These actions complement, but do not replace **higher effort actions** that are needed for medium and long-term changes in policy, institutions, infrastructure, economic systems, business models, and cultural practices. Examples of higher effort actions that foster sustainable ways of living appear at the end of the section.

Living lighter and better

With consumables, the goal is to shift to more sharing and reuse of quality goods that have longer lives and are maintained and repaired. Consuming differently is not the same as consuming less. Everyone needs to consume enough to survive and thrive. We also need to shift toward healthy, happy lifestyles with less impacts on the planet. It is not enough to purchase lots of 'green' products instead of lots of unsustainable products. This means rethinking wellbeing and what matters such as time with friends, family, community and in nature.

MORE EFFECTIVE, LOWER EFFORT ACTION AREAS

Here are a few ideas to shift consumer goods impacts and to get the conversation and action started in higher impact areas. These are relatively fast and easy ways to kickstart a shift towards more sustainable consumer goods choices:

- 1** Explore how we might rethink buying decisions
- 2** Make use of rental programmes
- 3** Engage with the sharing economy
- 4** Enhance the local repair infrastructure
- 5** Create a movement around reducing paper waste
- 6** Educate people about unsustainable and harmful types of plastics

- 7 Help people rethink fashion: how they use and dispose of textiles
- 8 Encourage the design and use of alternatives to single-use products
- 9 Encourage cultural shifts around responsibly produced and zero waste goods
- 10 Reduce the packaging associated with consumer goods
- 11 Support cooperatives of informal recyclers
- 12 Support community recycling collection points



Use the list below to identify with a tick mark the actions you are prioritizing.

Rethink buying decisions, for example, use services instead of owning goods

1 Explore how we might rethink buying decisions

- Promote time affluence – having sufficient time to engage in meaningful activities

This is seen in the media through the popularization of decluttering and frugality options. Raise awareness about the connection between pursuing wellbeing and intangible, non-materialistic goals.

- Organize around Buy-Nothing Day, active in more than 65 countries

Activity ideas are listed [here](#) and include the “Whirl-mart,” an awareness-raising stunt where “participants silently steer their shopping carts around a shopping mall or store in a long, baffling conga line without putting anything in the carts or actually making any purchases.”

2 Make use of rental programmes

- Educate and promote services that replace the need for individually owned goods

Examples include rented dishware for events, renting vs. owning a movie, sharing tools across neighbours (i.e., [Money Crashers](#) tool lending library), rental of clothing for special events.

3 Engage with the sharing economy

- Support and build out the infrastructure for sharing in the community

This can take the form of community tool sheds, group facilities for sewing, group facilities for processing / canning food, co-working spaces. Example services include: [Bunz](#) trading network; and [Craigslist](#). To note, supporting sharing initiatives also helps shift social norms – making it desirable to access services and goods this way. As such, helping people experience the benefits of sharing can make sense even in activities that don’t lead to a reduction in materials.



IMAGE: CLEM ONOJEHLUO: UNsplash

4 Enhance the local repair infrastructure

- Publicize the existing repair infrastructure

This can be done through a map of repair stores or an app that connects users with repair services (e.g., [Desquebre](#)).

***** *Build on existing initiatives – including those by local businesses.*

- Develop or support a Fix-it Clinic

Start a repair café or link / develop existing repair cafés for home and garden tools, kitchen tools, books, toys, games, sewing equipment, clothing, sports equipment, outdoor gear and other material goods. Examples of repair cafés and a toolkit (small fee) can be found at [repaircafe.org](#).




IMAGE: LOIKEN; UNSPLASH

- **Promote apps and websites for in-home repair**
Consider electronics or household appliances options such as [iFixit: The Free Repair Manual](#).

Reduce use of high footprint materials: paper, plastics, textiles

5 Create a movement around reducing paper waste

- **Promote pledges for paperless transactions**
This can include opting in to online billing from banks and service providers or encouraging restaurants and shops to offer receipts only upon request.

 *Paper, plastics and textiles each have a big impact: however, their eco-footprint rank varies by region.*

- **Increase the use of one-sided printed pages as scrap paper**
This can be done in small to large companies — as well as households.
- **Promote a shift toward paperless work through the use of online platforms to reduce paper use**
For example, shifting individual and collaborative work on documents electronically (e.g., Google documents).
- **Start a social media campaign asking people to scan paper files to archive them electronically**
Other options include hosting a shredding party for paper to be recycled. Local businesses could also offer shredding services.

- **Encourage individuals to use automated banking or receipts where safe and reliable**

Some retailers and banks are using email, SMS or WhatsApp to provide customers with receipts for purchases.

6 Educate people about unsustainable and harmful types of plastics

- **Educate people about harmful types of plastic**

Products containing polyethylene, polypropylene, polyethylene terephthalate or polymethyl methacrylate have large carbon footprints, as well as negative health impacts. There are many campaigns promoting awareness including [#BeatPlasticPollution](#).

- **Join or develop a pledge to avoid products including microplastics**

Microplastics are used in many personal care products such as face soaps, body washes, and toothpastes. The [International Campaign against Microplastic ingredients in Cosmetics](#) is supported by 93 NGOs from 38 countries and regions. Already 448 brands from 119 different manufacturers promised to remove plastic microbeads from their products.

7 Help people rethink fashion: how they buy, use and dispose of textiles

- **Develop a pre-loved challenge and fashion show**

Challenge people to shop second hand and assemble new outfits to be judged at a community fashion show for prizes (most creative, most fashionable, cheapest, best quality.)



IMAGE: DINH PHAM; UNSPLASH

- **Develop a textiles care workshop**
Offer pattern cutting classes, sewing and mending workshops, and repair cafés for creating, taking care of and mending clothing and other textiles.
- **Encourage clothes swapping among friends**
This allows people to be fashionable, while consuming less.
- **Encourage donations of used clothes**
Instead of throwing them away, donate them to organizations that can either get them to end users or rework them for the second-hand market.

- Promote voluntary simplicity programmes

Reduce waste from consumer goods

8 Encourage the design and use of alternatives to single-use products

- **Organize a design ‘jam’ to find solutions to plastic products**
Consider especially single-use plastics and test out the solutions in a city pilot.

- **Encourage the use of reusable cups**
These can divert a significant amount of waste (to-go cups, plastic and aluminum drink containers) from landfills. A small charge for paper cups and single-use plastics could be applied, or an incentive for using an alternative “travel mug.”


- **Encourage the use of glass or reusable bottles in restaurants, hotels and workplace cafeterias**

- **Join the movement to go straw-free**
This can be as individuals (e.g., by refusing or having an alternative metal, sugar-cane, bamboo glass straw) or by encouraging institutions (restaurants, bars) to go straw-free. [The Last Plastic Straw](#) seeks to change restaurant protocol. [Surfrider](#) and others are also driving change away from straws. Restaurants might choose to avoid straws altogether, use alternatives or charge for straw use.

- **Start or join a movement to replace plastic bags with cloth ones**
Many towns and cities are moving away from lightweight plastic bags. Some countries have [banned them](#) altogether, e.g., Bangladesh and Kenya. A simple approach with step-by-step “how to” information can be found at [Boomerang Bags](#).

9 Encourage cultural shifts around responsibly produced and zero waste goods

- **Engage with Zero Waste communities and programmes**
There are many communities built around the concept of living waste-free. A useful resource to connect with communities around the globe can be found at the [Zero Waste International Alliance](#).
- **Support the uptake of more responsibly produced or transported goods**
This can include supporting fair trade goods, or goods certified by reputable agencies as being sustainable products.

 *Learn from others doing similar work and share your insights.*

10 Reduce the packaging associated with consumer goods

- **Encourage retailers to make less use of disposable bags, wrapping paper, and shrink wrap plastics**
- **Support retailers and producers that offer products with minimal and/or recycled packaging**
Examples include: flat-pack furniture, free-pour drinks, bulk food.

- **Help businesses, hotels, restaurants and workplaces provide alternatives to bottled water**
Water filters can be used if water safety is an issue. If not, tap or filtered water in pitchers with glasses are a good option. Carbonators (e.g., Soda Stream) can make tap water a popular choice when out or at home. To incentivize customers to take this low-footprint option, water could be provided for free. At the same time, where this switch isn’t possible, promote plant-based alternatives such as bottles made from sugar cane.

11 Support cooperatives of informal recyclers

- **Encourage local government to create municipal recycling programmes**
Building on the success of informal recycling networks is a great way for local governments to expand their own waste management systems. See, for example, [WIEGO](#), a global network focused on the working poor in the informal economy.

- **Encourage the use of apps to donate recyclables to individuals making a living from recyclables**
For example, see [I Got Garbage](#) (India), and [Cataki](#) (Brazil), and [ReciclApp](#) (Chile).

12 Support community recycling collection points

- **Establish community ‘drop-off spots’ for recyclable waste, such as aluminum cans or batteries**
Possible locations include hotels, workplaces, businesses (including pharmacies, supermarkets, or electronics stores), and shopping centres.



IMAGE: FRANCESCO GALLAROTTI / UNSPLASH

THE NEXT LEVEL

HIGHER EFFORT ACTIONS

You've taken lower effort and easier to implement actions and are ready to take things to the next level. There are many actions that **require more effort but have greater and more significant ecological returns**. The actions listed below build on the experience and knowledge gained by pursuing some of the above actions. Additionally, it is likely that your network of sustainable lifestyles allies has expanded because of your activities. This presents a great opportunity to take on larger projects, exchange ideas, and work together with partners on actions that take more effort and resources.

Here are some examples:

Re-design for zero-waste packaging

Start or support a campaign to encourage producers and retailers to reduce the amount of packaging associated with their products. This could include redesigning existing packaging or developing packaging take-back programmes.

Reduce the use of plastics

There are a number of actions that can be taken to reduce the amount of plastics used in the consumer industry. Campaigns can be designed around the promotion of drinking filtered tap water as an alternative to bottled water. Similarly, a pledge can be developed to remove single-use plastics from restaurants, food services, homes, offices, factories and retail outlets. Single-use plastics include: shopping bags, water bottles, straws.

Recycling and reuse of consumer goods, while having a lower carbon-footprint impact than reducing the amount of goods produced and consumed, can be affected by cultural norms. The following actions do not have as high an ecological footprint impact as those listed above; however, they provide a starting point for individuals and organizations seeking to live more sustainable lifestyles and can have other benefits such as building community and a sense of connection with the natural world.




Here are some examples:

Actions that increase recycling and reuse of consumer goods

This includes participating in programmes that recycle aluminum cans, glass and plastic bottles, paper products, and batteries. It may also involve helping to establish recycling points that support residents and businesses in recycling and support informal recyclers. It also includes supporting second-hand merchants, swap-meets, and other aspects of the sharing economy that connect used goods with new homes.

Reduce the use of toxins

Even though toxins are not a significant part of the ecological and carbon footprint, even small quantities of toxins can have large impacts on human health and the environment. Encourage the use of natural alternatives to products containing toxic substances. This includes toxic-free cleaning supplies in homes and workplaces and diverting electronic waste such as batteries from landfills.

 *How can you support social justice and better lives for all?*





HOUSING

Living well in complete, low-carbon communities with more sustainable buildings and construction

BASED ON ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT AND CARBON FOOTPRINT DATA, PRIORITIZE THESE AREAS:



MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION AREAS



Reduce housing energy needs: consider smaller dwellings and efficiency retrofits

Support complete, compact communities

Tackle building and construction waste

Shift to more sustainable furnishings and appliances

SECONDARY ACTION AREAS

Reduce 'unnecessary' water consumption

Use fewer resources to run the home

Within each of these areas, actions range from lower effort – simple and quicker – to ones that require more investment of money, time or other resources. **Lower effort actions** are the focus of this publication and help move things in the right direction. Combine these actions together and build momentum to work on bigger and deeper changes! These actions complement, but do not replace **higher effort actions** that are needed for medium and long-term changes in policy, institutions, infrastructure, economic systems, business models, and cultural practices. Examples of higher effort actions that foster sustainable ways of living appear at the end of the section.

Long and short term actions on housing

Housing is not a choice people make on a daily basis. Where to live often changes based on life stage and cultural context as well as other influences like affordability. In addition, whether a housing choice is more or less sustainable often depends on aspects of the infrastructure (e.g., urban development contexts), which are not within the direct control of individuals. With housing, moving towards sustainability may require more sustained and longer-term engagement with community leaders and infrastructure providers. For short term efforts, other domains might provide better immediate results. Options presented are initial efforts to raise awareness and advocate for change, as well as quicker wins like household energy savings, sustainable furnishing and appliances. Shifting the context for housing is part of longer-term efforts.

LOWER EFFORT / MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION AREAS

Here are a few ideas to shift housing impacts and to get the conversation and action started in higher impact areas. These are relatively fast and easy ways to kickstart a shift towards more sustainable housing choices:

- 1** Support low-carbon energy sources
- 2** Engage households in reducing their energy footprint
- 3** Support the development of more affordable housing
- 4** Celebrate density with good design
- 5** Improve neighbourhood amenities

- 6 Help individuals and businesses better manage waste flows from construction, renovation, and demolition projects
- 7 Promote more sustainable practices in the construction industry
- 8 Design for low-impact renovations and retrofits
- 9 Promote the uptake of reused and repurposed furnishings and appliances
- 10 Encourage the use of more sustainable and easily regenerated materials for furnishings and appliances
- 11 Support more efficient transport and manufacturing of household furnishings and appliances



Use the list below to identify with a tick mark the actions you are prioritizing.

Reduce housing energy needs: Consider smaller dwellings and efficiency retrofits

- 1 Support low-carbon energy sources
 - Promote changes to low-energy light bulbs and sensor-based lighting
 - Switch to ecological electricity / energy providers
Promote ecological electricity services for households. This can include purchasing from renewable energy providers such as [BullFrog Power](#).
 - Promote the purchase of offsets for high carbon energy electricity sources, such as air travel, especially for institutions and companies

- Promote grey-water re-use systems in housing

2 Engage households in reducing their energy footprint

- Create a neighbourhood or community competition to reduce home energy consumption
This can include actions such as sealing the energy leaks in houses, lowering the thermostats by 1-2 degrees, selling or recycling unused appliances, and installing power bars for turning off electrical appliances. For example, see [EnergyNeighbourhoods](#) (neighbourhood competition) and [Cool Congregations](#) (competition across congregations).



Start conversations about footprint impacts with people you know.

- Develop community “green-teams” to reduce the energy consumption of households
Train champions to serve as leaders and organisers, developing social / educational events where community members can learn about energy efficiency opportunities. Featured opportunities can include actions at the individual, household, and neighbourhood / community levels. Note – “community” can be neighbourhoods but can also be communities of practice or faith.
- Educate individuals and families about how to reduce their home energy consumption
Simple actions can have a large impact on household energy consumption, such as unplugging appliances, properly maintaining refrigerators, and using less hot water. **Solar water heaters and clean cookstoves** are also gaining popularity.





IMAGE: STEPHEN LUSTIG; UNSPLASH

○ **Promote solutions that keep people comfortable when temperatures are high**

- Ventilation is key: **maximizing breeze** and cooling inside buildings. In many countries, this means adding **mosquito netting** to windows that will be opened.
- Simple fixes can be encouraged, e.g., individual business or home-owners can **white wash their tiles** and keep them clean to contribute to cooler indoor temperatures.
- Installing **green rooftops** and vertical green gardens also contribute to cooler indoor temperatures.
- Social norms may need to be addressed – at some workplaces in Japan, **during hot weather, less formal clothing can be worn** (e.g., lighter fabrics, looser cuts, shorter pants, and ties are optional). See [Cool Biz](#).

○ **Encourage individuals and families to conduct an energy audit**

This action allows for identification and quick action on areas where energy savings can be made. For a guide on how to conduct an energy audit, see: [Do it yourself home energy audit](#). This can be supported by providing information on average energy consumption in the neighbourhood (in terms of money and energy units). For example, see [Opower here](#) and [here](#).

○ **Identify and publicize government or private sector programmes that support energy retrofits**


For example, higher efficiency furnace, insulation improvements, new windows.

○ **Encourage one-time ventilation in homes and workplaces**

Open the window widely at only one time, instead of keeping the window open only a little bit for prolonged periods of time.

○ **Focus on health and well-being, instead of on carbon / energy efficiency**

See for example, the World Green Building Council's [Better Places for People](#) project.

 *Link initiatives to shared values.*

○ **Promote rainwater collection at home as a low-carbon alternative for uses like cooking, washing or watering the garden**

Rainwater barrels need different standards depending on the use – for watering the garden, almost any vessel will do!

Support complete, compact communities

3 Support the development of more affordable housing


○ **Map affordable housing areas**

Map core areas that lack affordable, flexible housing options. Results can be shared with networks and local city planners.

○ **Advocate for accessible dwelling unit pilot areas**

These housing units are affordable and more sustainable alternatives to standard housing options. One option can be to repurpose shipping containers, see an orphanage in South Africa made from shipping containers and other examples [here](#) and some of the debate [here](#).

○ **Support incentive areas and zoning changes to allow for more accessible dwelling units**

 *Keep going! Take on bigger and bolder action.*

4 Celebrate density with good design

○ **Research and promote the benefits of denser living and improved community feeling in denser living arrangements like apartments**

○ **Research and publicize design principles and ideas to boost social connections in multi-family living**

[Happy City](#) argues that “The way we design multi-family housing can make or break social connections and trust.” Raise awareness using the design principles that work using the [Happy Homes \(visual\) Toolkit here](#).



IMAGE: BRUNO MARTINS; UNSPLASH


5 Improve neighbourhood amenities

○ Encourage businesses to improve common spaces in neighbourhoods

For example, corporate ad-free sponsored greening of small public places that increase the walkability and enjoyment of a neighbourhood.

○ Encourage people to improve their neighbourhood

For example, through alternative uses of commonly held or seen spaces, by greening yards, adding community gardens, planting trees.

 Clarify how people can contribute in meaningful ways.

○ Contribute to the safety of the neighbourhood

Consider increasing the lighting around homes, creating clear sightlines, designing homes so that there are “eyes on the street” with windows, etc.

○ Start a neighbourhood watch programme

For example, [Block Watch](#) is a programme where neighbours get to know each other and support crime prevention together by forming a communication chain to report suspicious activity to each other and the authorities.

Tackle building and construction waste

6 Help individuals and businesses better manage waste flows from construction, renovation, and demolition projects

○ Create an inventory of businesses that recycle, reuse, or safely dispose of deconstruction materials

○ Educate about deconstruction opportunities for building demolition and renovations

○ Partner with or promote building deconstruction options including salvaged materials retailers

There are many business and employment opportunities in this space, e.g., [Second Chance Inc.](#) which trains those with employment barriers.

7 Promote more sustainable practices in the construction industry

○ Educate individuals and families about the benefits of energy-saving retrofits

For example, lifestyle and health benefits, as well as the value added to a home by improving energy efficiency. These are in addition to the ecological benefits. Make use of information gathered by nonprofits and governments to communicate about these benefits. Examples include: [City Green Solutions](#), and [NRCAN](#).



○ Encourage construction companies to install better insulation

Efficient insulation is one of the best ways to increase the energy efficiency of buildings and can be installed in new builds as well as during retrofits. See [Project Drawdown](#) for more information.

○ Encourage roofers to 'sell' (retrofit-able) green/vegetated roofing systems

These roofing systems extend the life of conventional roofing materials, provide extra insulation, reduce municipal runoff, provide habitat for pollinators, and enhance the aesthetics of the roof.

○ Promote the benefits of improved heating and cooling systems in new construction, supporting a shift in demand from home purchasers

○ Plan to make sustainable upgrades like insulation or better windows to homes as a neighbourhood

Organise upgrades as a group to secure better pricing and support a contractor with consistent work. Groups of homeowners / developers can partner to make bulk purchases from contractors offering sustainable home upgrades.

○ Encourage builders and developers to use building materials with embodied carbon

Building with wood can have a significant impact on reducing the GHG footprint of buildings.

○ Create and/or support community tool libraries to support homeowner repair, renovation and maintenance

Reduce need for individual tool purchase/ownership by encouraging tool libraries.

8 Design for low-impact renovations and retrofits


○ Educate individuals – including architects / developers – about reconfigurable rooms

Such rooms facilitate new and flexible use of space through movable walls, partitions and other design features that allow a space to be configured for diverse needs over its lifespan.



○ Encourage households to retrofit insulation and heating and cooling equipment where possible

Upgrading existing [insulation](#) and temperature control equipment (such as installing a [heat pump](#) or [smart thermostat](#)) provides immediate energy savings, visible indoor health improvements, and has a big impact on household energy efficiency.

 *Measure impact — set clear goals and demonstrate sustainability results.*

○ Replace incandescent lights with LED lighting

Switching from incandescent to LED lights has a significant impact on lowering the carbon footprint of housing.

Shift to more sustainable furnishings and appliances

9 Promote the uptake of reused and repurposed furnishings and appliances

○ Create supports (such as guides) that help individuals engage with the second-hand economy for household furnishings and appliances

Sourcing pre-owned furniture, furnishings, appliances, and household goods advances sustainability. Online buy-and-sell marketplaces are an option for consumers as are consignment stores or local, in-person markets. Additional models are emerging as the circular economy advances. For example, furniture retailer IKEA is piloting a resale [marketplace](#) for pre-loved drawers, tables, chairs, cabinets, desks and shelves. Buying second-hand can bring advantages beyond sustainability: pre-owned high-end goods often come with a smaller price tag than buying new. A guide can also let people know where to donate items when they are no longer needed so that they can be reused by someone else including being redirected to non-profits serving those with financial needs.

○ Develop an education campaign to reduce the high turnover of furnishings because of renovations and remodeling.

This can be focused on individual homeowners or, for example, property managers of apartment buildings. It is not aimed at retrofits to improve home sustainability performance (e.g., energy performance, cooling needs), routine maintenance, improving indoor air quality, etc. Where aesthetics or usability are being improved, the campaign can suggest sourcing second-hand, repurposing existing materials (e.g., reclaimed flooring), or refinishing furnishings (e.g., refacing existing kitchen cabinets with new doors, re-upholstering a sofa, painting a room).

10 Encourage the use of more sustainable and easily regenerated materials for furnishings and appliances

○ Encourage homeowners and developers to make use of more renewable materials during construction and renovation

Consider using sustainable materials for flooring and decorative woodwork. What is sustainable depends on the local context but can include bamboo, rattan or wicker, which are fast-growing and strong.

○ Educate about how second-hand furnishings often embody much of their footprint

For example, when reusing steel or marble, the manufacturing aspect of the footprint is amortized.

○ Promote low-ecological footprint furnishings by showcasing vendors or manufacturers

○ Support consumers to ask questions about what lies behind the product

For example, by circulating the Sustainable Furnishings Council (SFC) [pledge](#) to ask, "What's it made of?" whenever shopping for furnishings products and materials. You can use or adapt the [Supply Chain Questionnaire](#) prepared by SFC, which helps suppliers disclose ingredients like flame retardant chemicals or stain treatments systematically.


○ Promote the use of appliances and electronics that meet standards of sustainability

Appliances and electronics that meet labelling standards such as the [Energy Efficiency Label](#) and [Unified Energy Conservation Label](#) in Japan, and the EnergyStar standard in the [United States](#) and [Canada](#).

11 Support more efficient transport and manufacturing of household furnishings and appliances

○ Host a design competition with solutions for common furniture pieces or appliances in people's homes

This includes raising awareness of inefficiencies in the current manufacturing processes and possibilities for more sustainable design.

 *What non-financial resources can you draw on for support, e.g., local design students?*

- Support local vendors to develop or stock ready-to-assemble and/or flat-packed furnishings

This can reduce transport emissions.

THE NEXT LEVEL

HIGHER EFFORT ACTIONS

You've taken lower effort and easier to implement actions and are ready to take things to the next level. There are many actions that **require more effort but have greater and more significant ecological returns**. The actions listed below build on the experience and knowledge gained by pursuing some of the above actions. Additionally, it is likely that your network of sustainable lifestyles allies has expanded because of your activities. This presents a great opportunity to take on larger projects, exchange ideas, and work together with partners on actions that take more effort and resources.

Here are some examples:

Increase the energy efficiency of homes through retrofits


Partner with energy efficiency advisors to carry out building performance upgrades, assessments and rebates. Promote energy efficiency home assessments and rebates with builders and families through existing channels such as building advisors, interior design firms specializing in renovations, and banks providing renovation loans.

Advocate for the use of building energy rating systems

Engage trusted advisors (neighbours, community groups, local credit union / bank, energy consultants / assessors) to provide building energy ratings to inform prospective homeowners and renovators with the energy efficiency of the construction.

Support the introduction of mandatory building codes and minimum energy efficiency performance standards

This will give people the tools they need to easily choose and recognize energy-efficient buildings, and make more energy-efficient housing available.

 *Link to pressing conversations for greater impact.*

Encourage municipalities to establish programmes to link the recycling of construction materials with livelihoods

For example, collection points can be established across the city, supporting informal workers specializing in collecting debris from construction and demolition projects. The materials can then be transported by city trucks to recycling plants.

Support greater density with good design

Convene a network of housing projects to overcome challenges such as legal issues, reducing minimum dwelling sizes where practical, financing and group dynamics in order to support more collective housing projects. Non-profit housing societies operating affordable small housing projects are ideal partners.

Create enabling conditions for households to reduce their energy use

Launch a campaign to increase awareness of existing tax incentives, favorable mortgage rates and specialized loans targeting energy efficiency in both existing and new buildings. Include information on how to go about using incentives. Financial incentives need to be both widely known and easily usable.

The following actions do not have as high a footprint impact as those listed above; however, they can provide a starting point for individuals and organizations seeking to live more sustainable lifestyles and can have other benefits such as building community and a sense of connection with the natural world.

Here are some examples:

Support actions that reduce household water consumption

Increasing water-efficiency is a simple way to reduce the ecological impact of a household. Water-saving kits can be developed or purchased from many retailers. Co-promote with retailers the use of toilets with flush systems that use waste water from hand washing sinks, or dry urinals which do not use water.

Promote household appliances that use fewer resources

Develop or promote alternatives to standard household appliances that use fewer resources or materials in their operation. This could include making use of more appliances designed to make more efficient use of inputs such as water and electricity. Additionally, alternative appliances that also provide services can be adopted, such as toilets that turn biosolids into compost.

Support more efficient design, transport and manufacturing of household furniture and appliances

Promote the use of household appliances that are produced and / or transported in a more ecologically responsible manner. These appliances will have had lower water and energy intensity and used fewer materials (especially virgin materials) in their production.



LEISURE

*Promoting celebrations with high enjoyment
and lower footprints*

BASED ON ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT AND CARBON FOOTPRINT DATA, PRIORITIZE THE AREAS:



MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION AREAS



Rethink how we celebrate and host events to be both meaningful and to have a low footprint

Promote sustainable recreation

Reduce the carbon footprint of holidays

SECONDARY ACTION AREAS

Give your time to spend with others or to volunteer

Buy or craft eco-friendly (e.g., long-lasting, repairable) leisure goods and gifts

Use reusable dishware and decorations at events

Select an airline with green policies

Within each of these areas, actions range from lower effort – simple and quicker – to ones that require more investment of money, time or other resources. **Lower effort actions** are the focus of this publication and help move things in the right direction. Combine these actions together and build momentum to work on bigger and deeper changes! These actions complement, but do not replace **higher effort actions** that are needed for medium and long-term changes in policy, institutions, infrastructure, economic systems, business models, and cultural practices. Examples of higher effort actions that foster sustainable ways of living appear at the end of the section.

MORE EFFECTIVE, LOWER IMPACT ACTION AREAS

Here are a few ideas to shift leisure impacts and to get the conversation and action started in higher impact areas. These are relatively fast and easy ways to kickstart a shift towards more sustainable leisure choices:

- 1** Support low-impact birthday parties, weddings, and other special events
- 2** Support shifts in tradition through dialogue
- 3** Shift the norms around gift-giving
- 4** Host low-carbon nights out
- 5** Lower the impact of recreational activities
- 6** Campaign for local residents to explore their own city or neighbourhood, rather than taking trips abroad
- 7** Educate individuals about how to travel with smaller footprints
- 8** Support more sustainable tourism efforts
- 9** Travel abroad in a more low-carbon way




Use the list below to identify with a tick mark the actions you are prioritizing.

Rethink how we celebrate and host events to be both meaningful and to have a low footprint

1 Support low-impact birthday parties, weddings and other special events

- Support the community to rethink celebrations to lower their footprint

This includes practices like birthday treat ('goody') bags given to guests, traditional meals that are high footprint, or using disposable dishware. This can include modeling alternatives and/or hosting community discussions.

 Engage in meaningful ways to orient around people's needs and aspirations.

- Support or start a new venture aimed at greening local events through fewer disposables and better recycling

For inspiration, see the Recycling in a Box (ROX) package [here](#) offered by Green Chair Recycling in Canada, tailored to small events.

- Hire event companies who manage events more sustainably

This can include those who source food sustainably, prioritize plant-rich diets, avoid wasted food, and adopt zero waste practices (e.g., renting dishes).

2 Support shifts in tradition through dialogue

- Encourage a conversation about possible new traditions to replace less sustainable ones

For example, the [Shark Truth](#) campaign in Canada and Hong Kong presents alternatives to the tradition of serving shark fin soup at weddings.

- To note, there may also be traditional ways of celebrating that are less impactful than current practices and can be revalued – and revived

Examples might include home cooked dinners or handmade gift-giving.

3 Shift the norms around gift-giving

- Encourage giving experiences, rather than objects as gifts

For example, see Metro Vancouver's [Create Memories, Not Garbage](#) campaign for inspiration.




- Encourage companies to give local food, experiences or consumables as gifts and incentives

For example, at retirement events, when celebrating an event in an employee's life, or company events or milestones.

- Encourage friends and family to register non-material wishes for birthdays and weddings

Registries such as the [SoKind Registry](#) provide an excellent example, and where appropriate a local version can be developed in partnership with the Centre for a New American Dream. ([Video](#))

 Learn and adapt over time.

- Develop resource guides for individuals in alternative gift-giving

These include movie tickets, home-cooked meals, babysitting. For an example, see this list of [Gift Ideas](#).

Promote sustainable recreation

4 Host low-carbon nights out

- Partner with local food service businesses (e.g., café, pub) to host events

Events might include communal game nights, and / or having a café or pub store a library of used board games and books for customers to use. For example, see [Stormcrow](#).



Find allies in your community.

5 Lower the impact of recreational activities

- Evaluate the impact of recreational activities
- Raise awareness of the carbon / ecological impact of recreational activities



IMAGE: PHIL COFFMAN: UNSPLASH

- Promote camping and hiking as low-carbon recreational activities that connect people with the natural environment

Both can be done locally and provide rich opportunities to learn about and enjoy natural spaces.

- Start a gear swap in your workplace or neighbourhood for seldom-used sports gear or outdoor gear, such as tents, backpacks, etc.

- Provide more sustainable leisure opportunities at the neighbourhood level

These could include pop-up parks or community food fairs, etc.

- Promote “slow time” spaces and activities in the city

The [Take Back Your Time](#) movement has raised awareness about the importance of time affluence as compared with material affluence.

Reduce the carbon footprint of holidays

6 Campaign for local residents to explore their own city or neighbourhood, rather than taking trips abroad

- Start a week-long or multi-day initiative supporting local residents to explore their own city and local environments – rather than taking a trip abroad

Some cities have developed “Tourist in your own town” weekends. For example: [Victoria, Canada](#); [London, UK](#); and some general guidelines from [Pack Me To](#).

- Promote or develop tours within a city for local residents to discover new things about their home

Ideas include specialized tours such as natural, artistic, cultural, historical, humorous and science-based walks, or tours of public museums, and particular businesses such as breweries or second-hand stores.

- Promote alternative low-impact vehicles for tourists to explore cities, including electric cars and bicycles

7 Educate individuals about how to travel with smaller footprints

- Encourage travelers to educate themselves about the environmental practices of hotels, resorts, and service providers before they use them

This could include linking travelers with information on how to identify reputable certification logos.

- Provide information on how travellers can reduce the carbon footprint of their holiday trips

For a great list of recommended actions for travelers, see the [Green Passport](#) project as well as listings like those from [Intrepid Travel](#) [here](#), which include taking public transit, traveling overland to the next destination, or [WWF's list](#) [here](#) (e.g., selecting souvenirs that are positive for the environment and avoiding damaging recreational activities).

8 Support more sustainable tourism efforts

- Evaluate the impacts of tourism-related activities

- Conduct an inventory of more sustainable services targeting domestic and international tourists

Develop sustainable tours and engage with local producers and services to maximize the economic benefits to communities.

- Raise awareness of the impacts of tourism among active businesses in the industry


- Develop a city car-free guide for tourists

This guide would encourage the use of public transit, as well as other sustainable mobility options such as walking and biking.

- Promote or advocate for a transit pass discount programme for tourists

- Encourage local hotels, car rental companies, and taxi companies to offer options like electric cars or bikes, and car share programmes that make use of electric or low-carbon cars for tourists



 *Keep going! Build on your partnerships and successes.*

- Raise awareness with visitors about the way they can leave a positive footprint on tourism sites

9 Travel abroad in a more low-carbon way

- Encourage people to take a train, bus or ferry – rather than a plane – when possible

- Profile and promote different carbon offset programmes

Residents or workplaces can use these to compensate for their personal or business travel.

THE NEXT LEVEL

HIGHER EFFORT ACTIONS

You've taken lower effort and easier to implement actions and are ready to take things to the next level. There are many actions that **require more effort but have greater and more significant ecological impacts**. The actions listed below build on the experience and knowledge gained by pursuing some of the above actions. Additionally, it is likely that your network of sustainable lifestyles allies has expanded because of your activities. This presents a great opportunity to take on larger projects, exchange ideas, and work together with partners on actions that take more effort and resources.

Here are some examples:

Increase access to green spaces

There are many higher effort actions that can be taken to enhance urban residents' access to nature and green spaces. These range from building more walking and cycling trails, to developing social and educational programmes that make use to natural spaces. Additionally, many cities have taken action to reclaim green spaces within their boundaries. This is a longer-term endeavour but can have a significant impact on urban pollution and the health and happiness of residents and visitors.

Actions that lower the carbon-footprint of pets

Pet ownership can have a surprisingly large carbon and ecological footprint, but there are ways to reduce this 'pawprint'. One example is shared pet ownership, as in housing complexes sharing pets across multiple homes. Taking care of other people's pets while they are away and fostering pets who have been abandoned or lost their owners are all ways to have the joy of pet companionship without increasing the overall pet population. Another option to consider is to make use of alternative pet litters, such as compostable beddings and litters with reduced toxins. Biodegradable / compostable bags for disposing of pet waste is also another eco-friendly option. Similarly, low-footprint pet food can be sourced, including those made from reused foods, and encouraging feeding food scraps to pets where appropriate (i.e., vegetables for rabbits).

While taking action to reclaim urban green spaces and enhance access to nature can have a high impact on the carbon footprint of a town or city, it takes some time to show the results of these greening efforts. Smaller, more immediate actions such as those around pet ownership and care can serve as a good place to start in making leisure more sustainable.



GENERAL SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

Embracing wellbeing, engaging collectively, and shifting the big picture

BASED ON ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT AND CARBON FOOTPRINT DATA, PRIORITIZE THESE AREAS:



MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION AREAS



Highlight wellbeing with lighter footprints

Create campaigns that celebrate a new good life vision

Reduce advertising pressure

Engage in collective groups like neighbourhoods and workplaces

SECONDARY ACTION AREAS

Bring communities together for social connection and to create a sense of belonging

Engage in personal health practices such as mindfulness, meditation and yoga

Buy carbon offsets

Spend time in and connect with nature

Within each of these areas, actions range from lower effort – simple and quicker – to ones that require more investment of money, time or other resources. **Lower effort actions** are the focus of this publication and help move things in the right direction. Combine these actions together and build momentum to work on bigger and deeper changes! These actions complement, but do not replace **higher effort actions** that are needed for medium and long-term changes in policy, institutions, infrastructure, economic systems, business models, and cultural practices. Examples of higher effort actions that foster sustainable ways of living appear at the end of the section.

LOWER EFFORT / MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION AREAS

Here are a few ideas to shift general sustainable lifestyles impacts and to get the conversation and action started in higher impact areas. These are relatively fast and easy ways to kickstart a shift towards more sustainable lifestyle choices:

- 1** Highlight wellbeing in the community
- 2** Engage with key constituencies such as youth around sustainable lifestyles
- 3** Showcase a community vision
- 4** Transform marketing and advertising
- 5** Encourage cultural shifts that recognize the value of non-digital activities
- 6** Raise awareness of over-consumption and its effects

7

Engage people in collective groups including in neighbourhoods and workplaces

8

Join with others to advocate for government and business actions to reduce footprints in meaningful ways

Use the list below to identify with a tick mark the actions you are prioritizing.

Highlight wellbeing with lighter footprints

1

Highlight wellbeing in the community

- Establish a happiness / wellbeing survey that assesses the wellbeing of the community over time

A good example of a happiness survey has been developed by the Happiness Initiative and used in Seattle since 2011.

2

Engage with key constituencies such as youth around sustainable lifestyles

- Engage constituencies that present a higher opportunity for ecological footprint reductions

Certain segments of the population are key constituencies in reducing ecological footprints. Those with high disposable income have been found to have higher ecological footprints and therefore are a priority. People in life transitions are also promising constituencies to prioritize because these life transitions present opportunities to shift those individuals towards more sustainable practices. These include youth, immigrants, new parents, those starting a new career or moving homes, and retirees.

- Build capacity in sustainable lifestyle skills

Relevant skills can include repair, gardening, leadership, and movement-building, among others.



Embrace diverse ways of living in campaigns, reflecting different needs and wants.

- Develop social media outreach and education campaigns to help young people learn about and connect with sustainable lifestyle opportunities

Given that young people across the globe increasingly receive their information from social media, this is a tremendous way for immediate engagement.

3

Showcase a community vision

- Start a **100in1 Day** in your community

This is a global festival where citizens turn ideas into reality all over their cities on one day by celebrating the cumulative power of small changes and temporary projects. It started in Bogota, Colombia in 2012. This is similar to pop-ups, guerilla urbanism, DIY urbanism and placemaking.



Join with others to build momentum.

Create campaigns that celebrate a new good life vision

4

Transform marketing and advertising

- Start social media campaigns (e.g., Instagram) showcasing sustainable lifestyle choices and their positive impacts

- Celebrate and promote sustainable lifestyles through communications, marketing and advertising campaigns that reflect aspirations and examples of sustainable living

For inspiration see The Good Life 2.0 Playbook and China Dream.



IMAGE: BENJI AIRD: UNSPLASH



IMAGE: MI PHAM, UNSPLASH

5 Encourage cultural shifts that recognize the value of non-digital activities

- Engage the community in an awareness campaign around the increased commercialization of childhood

For example, see [New Dream](#), and the [Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood](#). The NGO Instituto Alana (Brazil) has consciousness-raising materials and documentaries and engages with broader policy reform.

- Encourage schools or households to select a week to be screen free and turn off digital games, apps, television and videos

For example, see [Screen-Free](#).

Reduce advertising pressure

6 Raise awareness of over-consumption and its effects

- Focus on aspirations and create compelling communications based on stakeholder values

Though crafting this message may be daunting, it can be presented in a positive, engaging, and even humorous way, with actionable steps that people can take. It has been shown that as negative communication and 'doom and gloom' campaigns are not effective in the long run. Engaging local champions or personalities can also offer additional positive enticements. For more guidance on fostering and communicating sustainable lifestyles see this [UN Environment report](#).

- Engage in a credit card cut-up while raising awareness of consumer debt, where this is an issue

"Participants stand in a shopping mall, shopping center, or store with a pair of scissors and a poster that advertises help for people who want to put an end to mounting debt and extortionate interest rates with one simple cut. Namely, by destroying their credit card by cutting it with the scissors."

- Promote the growing movement to exchange goods for free within the community

For example, see [Freecycle](#) and other communities / platforms. Note that this is distinct from bartering / trading where there is an expectation of exchange.

Engage in collective groups

7 Engage people in collective groups including in neighbourhoods and workplaces

- Engage neighbourhoods and communities

Link sustainable lifestyle initiatives to neighbourhood programming and community events. For example, community events such as neighbourhood block parties and community dinners that build belonging and social connectivity can be organized, profiled and promoted across communities and networks.



Keep learning and adapting as you build your initiative.

- Engage workplaces in sustainable lifestyles initiatives

Support workplaces to adopt a suite of sustainable lifestyles initiatives from across domain areas. A consultancy or stakeholder group could also develop a green office toolkit for small and medium-sized enterprises with products and ideas such as turning off screens, printing double-sided and less, providing clear recycling and composting bins, etc. Additional sustainable living in workplace ideas can be found in "Sustainable Lifestyles: Options and Opportunities through the Workplace" (UN Environment, One Earth 2018), a companion to this publication.



IMAGE: TRIBESH KAVASTHA, UNSPLASH



THE NEXT LEVEL

HIGHER EFFORT ACTIONS

Building on what has been done, with your gained knowledge and experience and a broadened network, consider actions that require more efforts but have greater impact!

- Facilitate ecological restoration in croplands, grazing lands, fishing grounds, built-up lands, forest areas and carbon sinks;
- Support procurement policies and programs within communities, companies, governments and institutions to use purchasing power to create a demand for more sustainable goods and services;
- Look at livelihoods and advance meaningful employment by supporting and guiding career paths that enhance sustainability;

- Explore how to shift cultural expectations of how to spend time — personal time, committed time, contracted time and free time;
- Celebrate through campaigns and new conversations about enhanced work-life balance and juggling competing demands of work, family, and personal needs; and
- Keep up-to-date on the latest ideas and action on sustainable living and lifestyles including by searching online and by joining networks that exchange on related subjects such as the One Planet Network.



Keep going! Take on bigger and bolder action.



SHARE YOUR SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES INITIATIVES: ONE PLANET NETWORK

This publication provides a sample of the many actions that can advance sustainable lifestyles. We recommend combining actions from across domains and inviting others to join you. Once you've started on these initiatives, we also suggest taking efforts to the next level and tackling some of the higher effort and significant actions that are needed for sustainable ways of living.

UN Environment acts as a secretariat and implementing partner of the One Planet Network. The One Planet Network is an implementation mechanism for Sustainable Development Goal 12, and multi-stakeholder partnerships that provides tools and solutions, and leads the shift to sustainable consumption and production. The [Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme](#), specifically addresses lifestyles and contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production.

For more information, take a look at the [One Planet Network website](#), an online place for making connections between organizations and individuals who want to scale up their work across regions and sectors – towards the shift to more sustainable methods of consumption and production. On this knowledge management platform of the One Planet Network, you can explore sustainable consumption and production activities that others are undertaking, share your work with a global audience, and access collective resources.

We are interested in learning more about sustainable lifestyles campaigns and initiatives from around the world. Consider contributing your projects to the [One Planet Network website](#). Let's join forces to transform our daily lives to advance global sustainability.



Globally, people are weaving sustainability into their daily lives – meeting needs and pursuing wellbeing and aspirations through building community; reducing meat and dairy consumption; wasting less food and using leftovers; reusing, repairing, recycling, sharing and borrowing goods; and enjoying the things that matter most, such as friends, experiences and nature.

This is impressive since aspirations of ‘the good life’ continue to be strongly influenced by pro-consumption messaging and because people who are aware may not have more sustainable options available. Yet, taken together these actions are piecemeal and do not capture the full potential that holistic sustainable living initiatives can offer.

This publication addresses this gap. It provides a sample of proven lifestyles options and opportunities including in the areas of food, mobility, housing, consumer goods, and leisure and encourages creating holistic sustainable living initiatives. The audience is people running campaigns and initiatives with limited resources who want maximum impact.

We welcome you to explore these opportunities and to create initiatives that work in your context – because what works in Brazil is different from what works in Morocco.

Join us in advancing sustainable living and lifestyles in more effective ways.