YOU(TH) IN CHARGE

'Keen on green!'

European Parliament

AMBASSADOR SCHOOL

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YOU(TH) IN CHARGE

'Keen on green!'

INHOUDSOPGAVE

INTRODUCTION

No doubt you have heard about it. The climate is changing and that leads to negative consequences not only for the world, but also for you. What might perhaps be less clear is what YOU can do to live more sustainably and make your environment a little bit greener. In this module, you will tackle that question by looking at your visible and invisible impact on the climate and at what you can do to reduce your negative impact.

Climate change is a large and complex topic. On the one hand, impact sometimes appears to be very small. On the other hand, steps are being taken in many places, including by local, national and European administrations, to make the world more sustainable. There are many small and large initiatives that, taken together, can make a real difference.

Within Europe, work is taking place for example on the **European Green Deal**, an extensive package of measures that the EU Member States have drawn up to make Europe green. The most significant parts of the Green Deal are reducing and offsetting CO2 emissions by 2050 while ensuring economic growth. The Dutch European Commissioner in the area of climate, Frans Timmermans, said the following on the Green Deal: 'With the European Green Deal to guide our way, we shall get there.'

Now you may be asking yourself what YOU can do, just as plans are being made at a much higher level! Large-scale sustainability seems like something for politicians and industry to deal with, but young people have already shown that they can have a great impact. Take, for example, Greta Thunberg, who urged young people around the world to strike for the climate and, according to Frans Timmermans (there he is again!), has made a significant contribution to highlighting the urgent need for sustainability to be tackled NOW.

Another example is Boyan Slat, a Dutch teenager who wanted to tackle the problem of the large amounts of plastic in the seas. His start-up, The Ocean Cleanup, is now active throughout the world with innovative robots to remove litter from the seas and

The
European Green Deal
is THE European response to the climate crisis. Its aim is to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. Climate-neutral means that Europe does not emit more CO2 than it absorbs or offsets. In 2030, the EU aims to emit 55% less CO2. To achieve these targets, the European Commission has come up with a package of measures.

prevent new litter from ending up there. As you can see, YOUth are in charge!

In this module, we wish to challenge you to think about how you could make an impact on the climate, but above all how you could make your own environment (your school, house, street, sports club, town or city, country and the EU) more sustainable. To give you extra motivation, we are even turning it into a true challenge! Would you like to take part? We will explain later how you can participate and what you have to do.

For now, it is important to read through this booklet carefully. We have selected a number of areas in our daily lives and environment where a lot of things still need to be made sustainable. By reading this booklet, we want to inform and inspire you so that you can not only make a start but, in turn, spur others into action: Together we can bring about change:

YOU(TH) ARE IN CHARGE!

IMPACT: (IN)VISIBLE?

GENERAL: WHAT IS IMPACT?

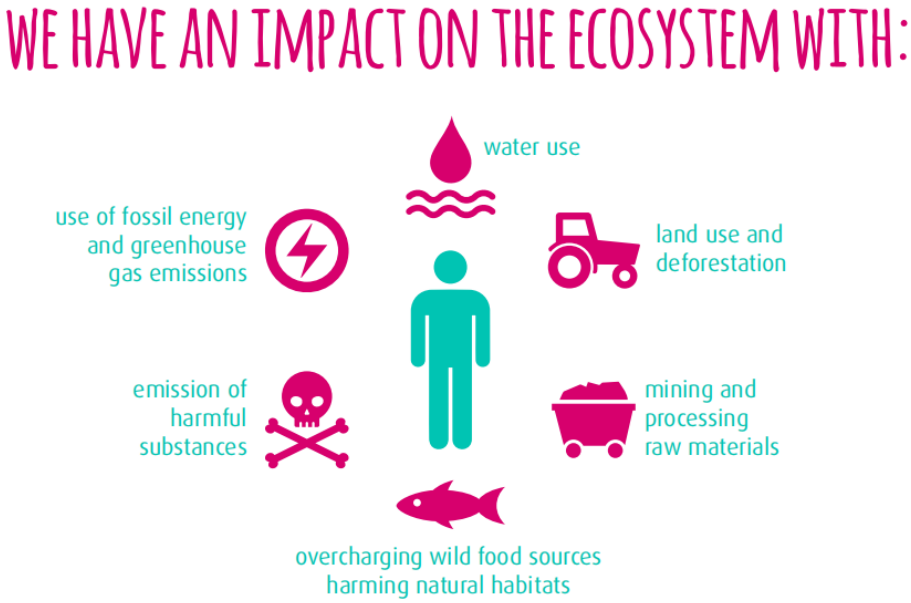
Here we will look more closely at how we have a visible and invisible impact on the climate. We will focus on four topics:

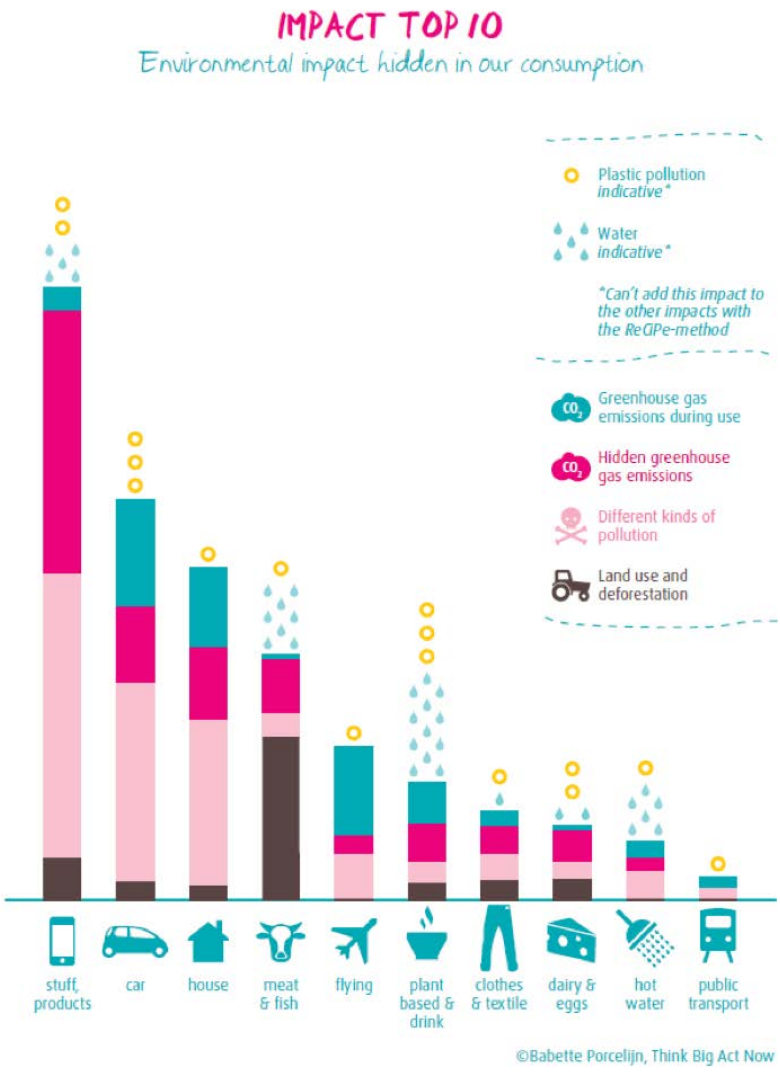
1. **Eating and drinking**
2. **Clothing and personal possessions**
3. **Transport**
4. **Living**

For each topic, we will give you some information and ask you to think about what you can do to reduce your impact in this area, based on a few examples. Each time, the key question to be answered is **'what can I do to be green?'** But before we get started, we will briefly explain what **impact** actually is.

We know that human behaviour greatly affects our environment, and consequently also nature and life around us, our **ecosystem**. The most significant forms of human impact are shown in the picture here.

Looking at the picture, you might perhaps be thinking: 'That's OK. I don't fish, I don't work in agriculture or in a chemical factory.' However, we do not realise that we have a massive impact on the environment in our role as **consumers:** through what we eat, where and how we travel, what new things we buy and how we live. For all this, we need a lot of products and services, and these in turn have both a visible and invisible impact on our ecosystem.





Visible impact - you have guessed it – is something that is noticeable. Examples are dirty car and lorry exhausts, but also litter left lying in the street, which eventually ends up in nature. It is much more difficult to imagine **invisible impact**. It often means processes that do not leave an obvious or direct trace or that take place on the other side of the world. Think for example of all the water and food that cattle need before a piece of meat ends up on your plate. Or think of the huge mines that are excavated in the search for the rare materials to produce chips for your phone or laptop.

Take a look at the picture. It indicates the visible and invisible impact an average Dutch person has on the environment. It differs from person to person. Of course, most young people do not yet own a car or a house. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that if you ask your parents or other members of your household to drive you to your sports club, for example, or if you turn up the heating at home, this affects the impact of the whole family/household. We will look at this more closely in the following section.

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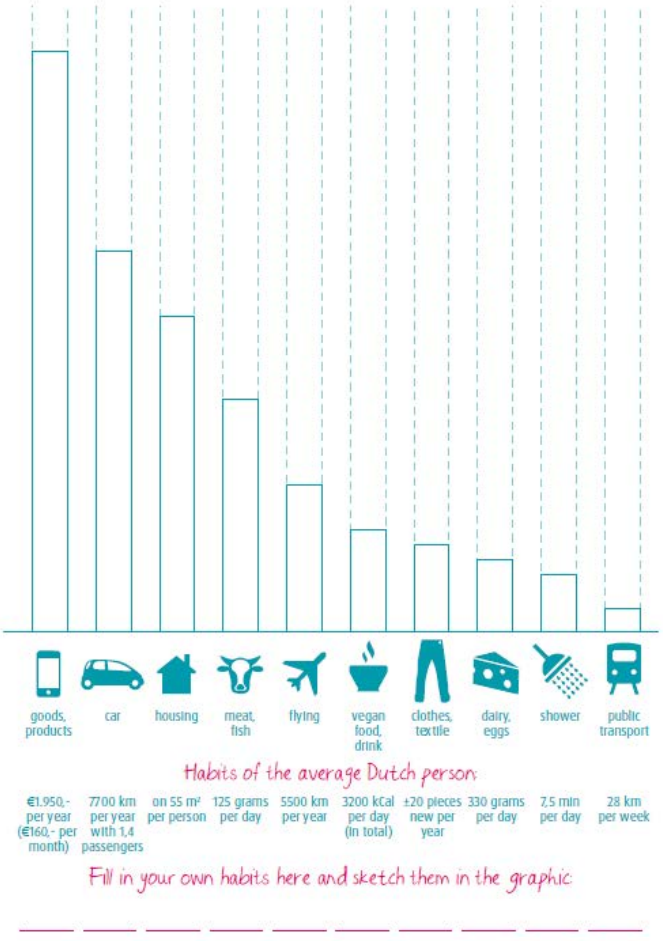
CHECK YOUR IMPACT

Compare your own habits to those of the average Dutch person and find out roughly what your quick-wins are. Put your values on the red lines and draw them in the top 10. Any surprising results?



Hidden Impact / Think Big Act Now

'KEEN ON GREEN!'

We understand, of course, that it may be difficult to get a clear insight of how much impact you have on the climate. At the same time, we feel it is important that you DO attempt to understand how much you impact the climate by the choices you make. If you do, then you can also gain insight into how you can make a big difference by taking small steps. Fortunately, there are many different apps and websites that enable you to estimate or even measure your impact. Before you read any further, we would therefore like to challenge you to do one of these tests.

ASSIGNMENT:

This chapter used the hidden impact of the average Dutch person to show which categories in daily life have the greatest impact. However, the impact of an average Dutch person is not representative of the rest of Europe. As such, we challenge you to use the diagram above to estimate your own (hidden) impact as compared to the average Dutch person.

Are you stuck? Ask your classmates, a teacher, a parent or a guardian for help.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR AN ADDITIONAL CHALLENGE?

ASSESS THE SUSTAINABILITY OF YOUR SCHOOL !

We have developed an **interactive climate scan** allowing students to independently assess the performance of their school in terms of sustainable by awarding scores to the school's performance within five key areas of sustainability. The climate scan was jointly commissioned by the European Parliament Liaison Office in the Netherlands and the Representation of the European Commission in the Netherlands.

Teachers or dedicated students, like junior ambassdors, may freely share the climate scan with their (fellow) students who may fill in the form individually or in small groups. **The results may be discussed in class in all discretion, without personal details.**

The climate scan is a Google Form. Therefore, a Google account is required in order to distribute the form and to have access to the results. ***You do not need a Google account for filling in the form***, however.

You use the climate scan as follows:

1. **For the English version** you use: **http://bitly.ws/sVdG**. This link takes you to a webpage that asks you whether you would like to make a copy. To make a copy you press the blue ´Copy´ button. ***PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE THE CONTENT OF THE FILE AT THIS POINT***.
2. **You navigate** towards the three vertical dots in the upper-right corner next to ´Send´ and you press ´Copy´. You subsequently save a copy by choosing a map on your personal Google drive and by pressing ´Save´. As soon as this is done, a new webpage should open showing your copy. You now have your own copy of the climate scan.
    a. (You can make individual copies for different classes if you like).
3. **You can share** the copy with the students by clicking ´Send´ in the upper-right corner. You can fill in specific email addresses immediately or share a link by firstly clicking the small icon next to the icon of the envelope and secondly by copying the provided link. (You may put this link in an e-mail to the students, in a powerpoint or in any other means of communication towards the students).
4. **After you have shared** the copy of the form with the students, you may access their responses at any time by navigating to the copy of the form within your Google drive and by opening the ´Responses´ tab after opening the form.
    a. On this tab, you may put the responses of the students in a spreadsheet by simply pressing the green icon in the upper-right corner. You can use the spreadsheet to discuss the results of the scan with the students.

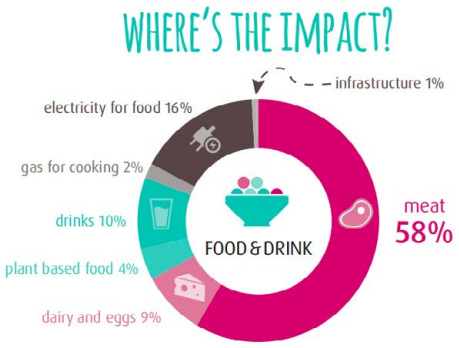
1. EATING AND DRINKING

Our eating and drinking habits have a great impact on our environment. However, it is difficult for us as consumers to estimate accurately how much certain choices contribute to climate change. Much of the impact in food and drink is concealed in the production process or transport. Nor is every piece of meat equally harmful and even non-animal products can have an adverse impact on the climate. In this chapter, we will explain where the pollution occurs in our food supply and what we could do differently.

(IN)VISIBLE IMPACT

Eating and drinking are important reasons why an average European person's impact on the climate is very large in comparison to that of people living in other parts of the world.

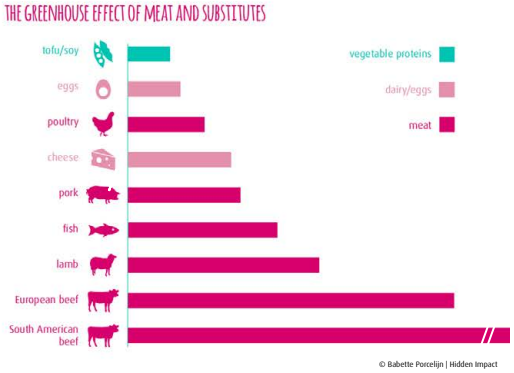
First of all, European citizens eat a lot of animal products and these are notable for having a high hidden impact. Take a look at the diagrams below, which show clearly how much certain foods contribute to CO2 emissions. Meat, especially beef, results in high emissions. Poultry, such as chicken, is already a lot more sustainable, as are cheese and eggs. Vegetable products such as tofu and soya are the most sustainable but still result in emissions. The diagrams are based on the consumption of various food items by an average American. The data for an average European is not much different.



Impact of the average American, according to the ReCiPe method, without water. Taking the car to the shop, however, is not included here but it's covered in the category 'transport'.

The reason why meat causes such high emissions is that a cow or pig has to eat a lot before being processed. The CO2 released to grow the food for the animals before you eat them should also be included in the calculation of the consumer's impact on the climate. In addition, the sheds to house livestock have to be heated in winter and the cattle themselves emit CO2 and other greenhouse gases, just as humans do.

As well as the emissions that come from the production of food for the animals, there is the transportation of the meat from the farm to the meat processor and then to the supermarket. This transport is a minor problem if all three are close together, but in practice, that is often not the case. The same applies to vegetable products that often have



to travel even greater distances. Some products, such as South American beef, have to be transported on very large ships before ending up on your table. Combined with large amounts of food for the livestock grown in a non-sustainable way, this South American beef causes almost three times more emissions than meat from the European continent!

Vegetable products are generally more sustainable than meat or animal products, but some of these products are notable for having a high hidden impact on our environment. To grow the products, land has to be made ready for large farms or plantations, for instance. This is often at the cost of large swaths of forest, as for example in the tropics. This is not only bad for CO2 emissions but also for **biodiversity**. Large quantities of fruit and vegetables are also produced in faraway countries and shipped to Europe by massive boats which contribute to high emissions.

We have talked mainly about food, and less about drinks. That is partly because the recommendation for drinking more sustainably is quite clear. It is far better for the climate to drink tap water, as there is a large **hidden impact** in the packing and transport of bottles of drinks – including bottles of water! It is therefore a good idea to avoid bottles as far as possible. If bottles cannot be avoided, try to re-use them. In addition, water is simply very healthy - another reason to choose it.

Biodiversity:
All the different animal and plant species that occur together in our environment.

Did you know?
Tottenham Hotspur, an English football club playing in the Premier League, has banned single-use plastics, such as straws and bags, ever since opening their new stadium back in 2018.
Use **this link** to learn more.

'KEEN ON GREEN!'

All in all, eating and drinking is always going to result in a little pollution. However, we can reduce our adverse impact on the climate by making certain choices.

You might know someone who follows a **vegetarian** or a **vegan** diet or do so yourself. A vegetarian diet means not eating any meat but still consuming animal products, such as cheese, eggs and milk. Someone who follows a vegan diet does not eat or drink any animal products. This is one way of reducing your impact on the climate. It is obviously better for the animals, too. It can be difficult though to stop eating meat or animal products completely. Nonetheless, not eating meat every day and only eating it every other day or at the weekend is already a good start. Another idea is to use more meat substitutes. These days there are lots of products on the supermarket shelves that taste remarkably like real meat yet are made from plants.

Do you still want to eat meat? You can, of course. If you do, try opting for less polluting products, for example poultry, instead of beef. Do not buy any products that come from far away and try instead to buy meat, vegetables and fruit from within your country. Doing so is not just good for the climate; it supports local farmers too.

Drinking tap water probably sounds very boring to you. Nevertheless, it is best for the climate, especially if you use cups and bottles that can be reused. To make tap water more appealing, you can give your water some extra zing by adding in a slice of cucumber, a strawberry or a mint leaf. It' s not just fun, it' s healthy too!

You will not always be able and willing to make the best choice for the climate straight away. We hope, however, that with this information to hand you will speak to your friends and family or the canteen at your school or sports club about how you can consume and provide more sustainable options together. That way you can take the lead on what you eat.

YOU ARE IN CHARGE!

ASSIGNMENT

Watch one of the following documentaries on your own or with your classmates:

- Game Changers (Netflix) - This documentary talks about how good sporting performance and good health are boosted by not eating any meat.
- Cowspiracy - This documentary looks at malpractice in agriculture and livestock husbandry. N.B. This film contains images that some might find shocking.
- Seaspiracy - In this documentary, research scientists look at malpractice in the fishing industry and how this leads to less biodiversity and a polluted world. N.B. This film contains images that some might find shocking.

Top tips:

1. Talk to the other members of your household about eating less meat: at the weekend or every second day, for example.
2. Buy local products, both animal and vegetable, instead of products that have to travel from far away.
3. Use meat substitutes. Or eat poultry instead of beef where possible.
4. Buy a vegetarian or vegan cookbook, or ask for one as a birthday present.
5. Buy and use a reusable water.

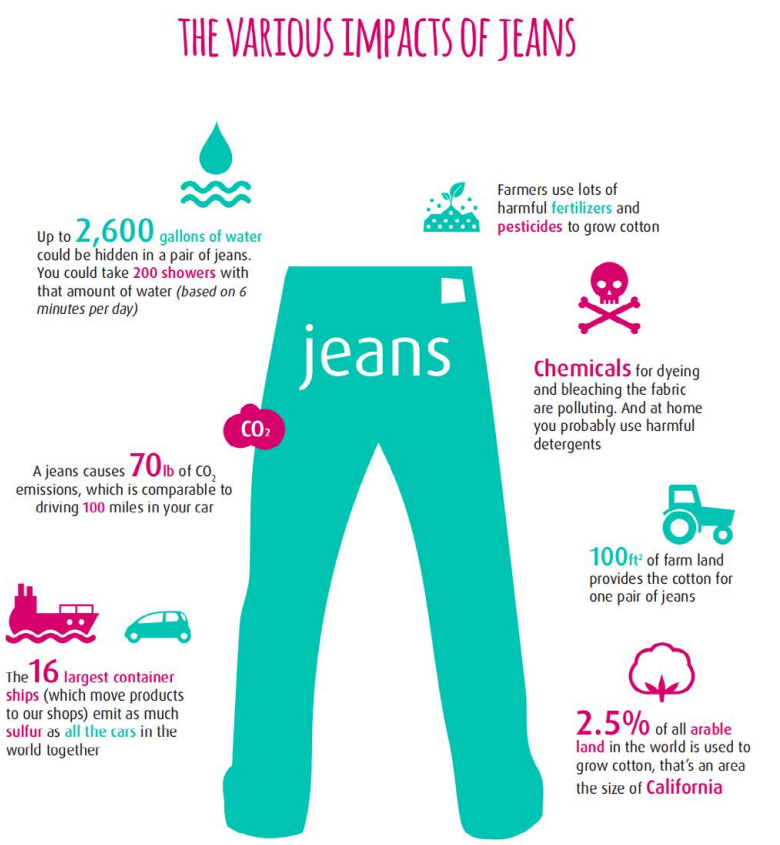
2. CLOTHING AND PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

As consumers, we like to go shopping, have the latest smartphone and follow the latest fashion trends. We shop online or in town with friends. We often also buy things that we do not really need or only use once. We have learnt that things we buy raise our status and happiness. We celebrate and reward ourselves with new possessions. There is also so much advertising carrying the message that we must purchase something new that it is sometimes difficult to say no. We obviously need certain things to live a pleasant life and we like to spoil each other with something nice every once in a while. You do not need to do away with all your possessions or never buy something new. However, we would like to make you more aware of some of the alternatives.

(IN)VISIBLE IMPACT

Why is it so important to pay attention to how much and what you buy? It has to do with the **invisible impact** the production of clothing or electronics has on the climate. A huge amount of water is used to make one article of clothing. Up to 7 000 litres can be used to make one pair of jeans! And that's not all! A lot of clothing and electronics are produced in other countries and then transported to Europe in large volumes on enormous ships. As a result, these industries have a massive impact on CO2 emissions.

On the other hand, many items of clothing and similar items are used only once or only briefly and are then thrown out. Ideally, part of them is reused, but in many cases this bulky waste



© Babette Porcelijn | Hidden Impact

is shipped back to the often low-wage countries where the items were made and ends up in huge landfills there. Not only does mean that they cause even more pollution as they are transported via ships, but the **ecosystems** of the populations of those countries are threatened by litter as well.

In 2014, 60% more clothing was thrown out on average than in 2000. The clothing industry is responsible for about 10% of total CO2 emissions, more than the emissions of international aviation and sea transport put together![1]

Water shortages around the world can also be caused by the clothing industry, and it is responsible for a large amount of the plastic that ends up in the oceans (which Boyan Slat aims to prevent with The Ocean Cleanup!). A great deal of plastic is used during the production of particular types of clothing, specifically sportswear made of polyester, but also T-shirts and jeans. When clothing is then washed, small particles of plastic, known as **microplastics**, are detached and carried away through the sewers before finally ending up in the sea. This is the impact of **fast fashion** on our planet.

Fast fashion:
the part of the clothing industry where clothing is produced quickly, does not last long and is therefore soon thrown out again.

Similar considerations apply to your smartphone or laptop. Various rare commodities that can only be reached by deep excavation are used in electronics. The heavy machinery required for this purpose emits harmful gases, and some large mines cause harm to their immediate surroundings. This harm to the environment, just like in the case of the clothing industry, often takes place outside Europe. The impact is therefore often **invisible.** The adverse impact on the climate that takes place there nevertheless does eventually have an impact on the climate in Europe and elsewhere, for example through **rising sea levels, more intense rainstorms and dry spells.**

1 See this web page of the United Nations Environmental Programme.

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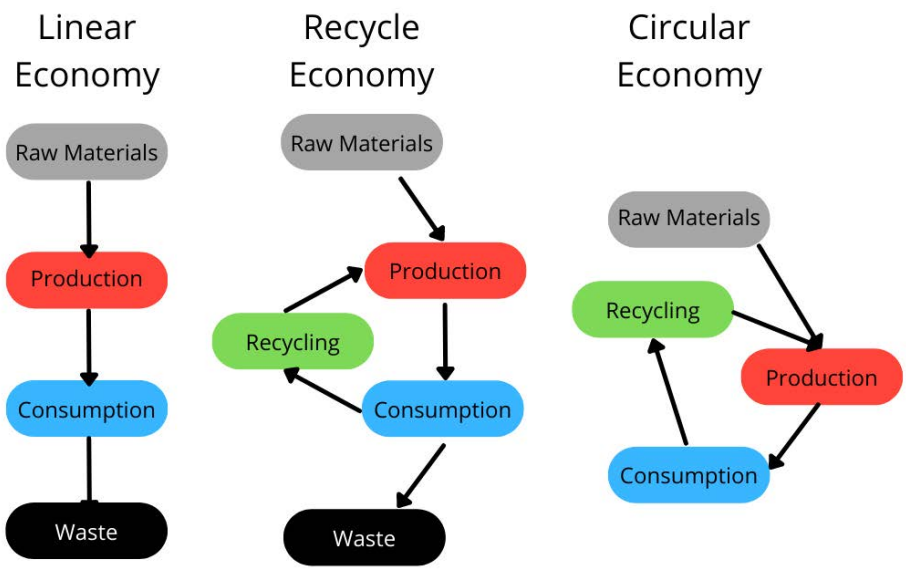
Sea level rise:
The earth is warming at a quickening pace due to harmful gases such as CO2. As a result of global warming, the ice caps are melting at the poles, causing sea levels to rise.

The clothing and the electronics industries therefore have a great impact on the climate. This does not mean, however, that you can never buy a new pair of trousers or a new smartphone. But here, too, small steps can make a big difference. We hope above all that you become aware that it is beneficial to the climate to make do with your clothing, your new laptop or other possessions for as long as possible. So do not always be looking for the very latest, but shop for clothes that last a long time and that do not go out of fashion quickly. Alternatively, shop for second-hand items. And, if your clothing is no longer attractive or is worn out, take it to a vintage shop, swap it or turn it into something new. Even laptops and smartphones can often be given a second life. This is called **refurbishing**.

At present, clothing and electronics are often an example of the **linear economy**. Products are first made, then sold and used, and eventually end up in waste. However, by thinking about how we can reuse items, electronics or clothing or give them a second life, we can work slowly towards a **recycling** or even a **circular economy.**. In a recycling economy, we use our possessions for as long as possible, but after being reused a few times they still end up in landfill. That would be a step in the right direction, but there is a better way. In a circular economy, our possessions and, above all, the raw materials contained in them can be reused almost endlessly. The illustration below shows the difference between a linear, a recycling and a circular economy.



YOU ARE IN CHARGE!

If we all think about reusing our possessions, we can together make a huge difference and gradually say goodbye to the linear, non-sustainable economy.

ASSIGNMENT:

Open your wardrobe and divide your clothes into three groups:

1. clothes you want to keep;
2. clothes you no longer like/need, but that others would be very happy with if you swapped them or gave them away;
3. clothes that are past their best, or nearly past their best, but that you would like to repair or have repaired.

We then challenge you to swap at least one item of clothing from group 2 with a friend and to donate the rest to a vintage shop or charity.

Top tips:

1. Buy fewer clothes or other personal possessions. If you do buy something, buy clothing that does not go out of fashion quickly or other items that are good quality. What you buy will then last longer.
2. Shop second-hand and bring your clothing and electronics to vintage stores when you have finished with them.
3. Swap your clothes or other items with friends or neighbours. Then you both have something.

3. TRANSPORT

In this module, we have mentioned transport a number of times, for example when discussing the transport of food, drink, personal possessions and clothing. The transport of goods, especially by sea and air, contributes largely to the negative impact on the climate. But in this chapter we wish to focus in particular on passenger transport, because it is useful to bear in mind that as an individual you can improve sustainability both by shopping differently and eating differently, and also by making different choices for getting from A to B.

(IN)VISIBLE IMPACT

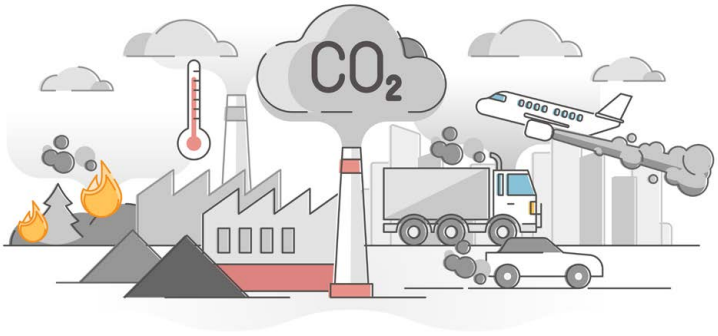
First, an example. At the start of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, there was suddenly a lot of people working from home and there was less reason to go out because many shops were closed. As a result, far fewer kilometres were travelled and there was a reduction in emissions. According to the Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands, there was between 20% and 60% (!) less air pollution across Europe during that time. Less air pollution is not just good for the climate. It is good for our health too.

Discover:
On the **website** of the Technical University of Delft there are various pictures showing the air pollution before and after the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

It is important that we all stop to consider how, when and why we use particular forms of transport. This applies to you, too. Even if at your age you have perhaps less choice in what transport you use, you can nevertheless discuss this topic with your parents or other members of your household so that your family's adverse impact can be reduced. More about that later. Let us first take a brief look at the most common forms of transport, so that we have a good picture of where the greatest impact is hidden.

AIRCRAFT

Put simply, flying is highly polluting. Most emissions take place during take-off, but it obviously also takes a lot of fuel to keep the aircraft up in the air. It is generally true to say that fewer aircraft movements, in other words taking off and landing less often, are less harmful for the climate.



Of course, not flying at all is the best option for the climate.

Discover:
The Transport & Environment **website** has calculated how the CO2 emissions of conventional and electric cars compare during production and use.
You can see how they compare. Striking: the production of electrical cars has higher emissions, but the emissions during use are much less.

CARS

Going from A to B by car causes considerably less pollution than flying. We obviously also travel far shorter distances by car. All those cars and all those trips taken together nevertheless have a substantial negative impact on the climate. So there, too, less is better! What we often forget is that cars do not just cause visible pollution through the fuel we use, but that there is a large hidden impact in the production of cars. This is often forgotten when electric cars are discussed. Electric cars are considerably more economical to use than ordinary cars, but the same rare commodities are needed to make electric cars as other electronics and this results in a great deal of pollution during production. We have already discussed the harm that mining does to the environment in finding these commodities.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

We know, of course, that as a young person and student you do not own a car just yet. And you probably don't book any holiday flights either. You are more likely to use public transport or a bicycle. That is great, because both forms of transport are more sustainable than cars. Buses would be heavily polluting if they only carried a single passenger, but because a bus transports dozens of people at the same time, the bus becomes more sustainable than a passenger car carrying a maximum of five people.

In addition, trains are an excellent alternative to planes for some distances. Within Europe, for example, it is becoming easier to travel by train between major cities. By using the train, you see much more of the local landscape as well in comparison to the plane, a nice benefit for when you are on holiday!

BICYCLE

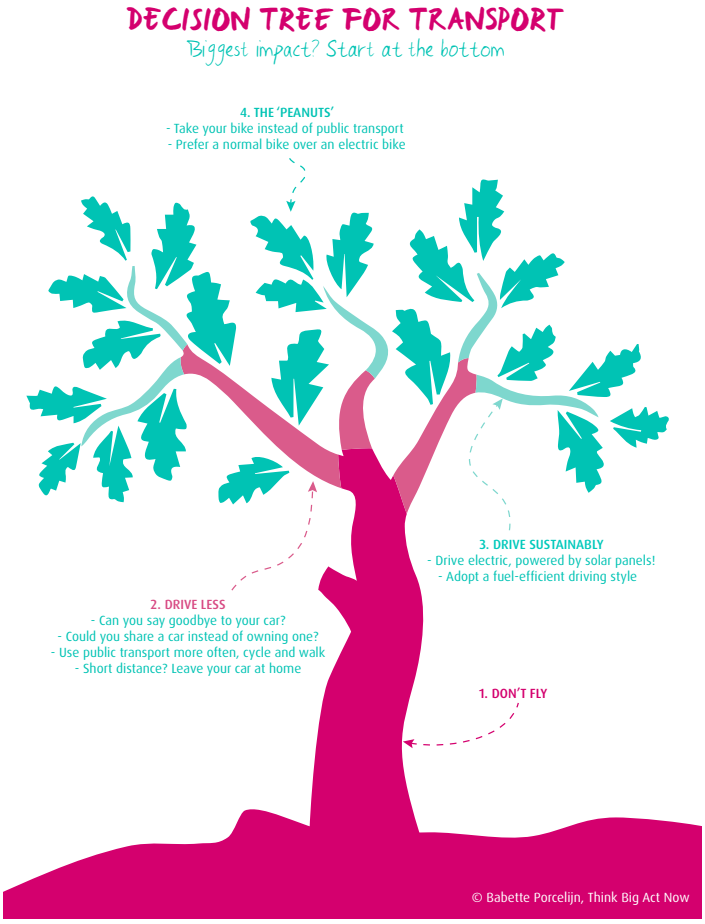
We probably do not need to tell you that bicycles are by far the most sustainable form of transport. We would, however, like to emphasise just how significant the difference is. Bicycle production is quite straightforward, but using a bicycle does not require any energy at all (except your own physical effort, of course!). That

makes cycling extremely healthy and, above all, a good option for short distances, for example when you need to get to school or your sports club. Even if it takes you a bit longer to go from A to B by bike, it is worth remembering that you do not emit any CO2 at all! On top of that, cycling is also much healthier for you!

'KEEN ON GREEN!'

With all this information let's now look at how we can make more sustainable choices. The illustration here shows clearly that by far the best choice we can make is not to fly, or to fly as little as possible. If we do take a plane, it is important that it is over long distances and that you take off and land as little as possible.

We should then make less use of cars, in particular. Ideally, we would not have a car at all, followed by having an electric car and driving it as little as possible. Travel on public transport as much as possible or cycle. Make sure you use a car only if there really is no other option. These are obviously small steps compared with the option of never flying. They nevertheless make a substantial contribution, and the main lesson is always to consider whether there might be a more sustainable option for getting from A to B.



YOU ARE IN CHARGE!

ASSIGNMENT:

Make a list of trips you have made in the past week. For example to school, to your sports club or to the supermarket. Look at the list. Think carefully about what form of transport you used and whether a more sustainable option might have been possible.

Finally, discuss with other members of your household your ideas about how to make transport over the course of the week more sustainable, and look at what is possible together.

Top tips:

1. Do not fly, or fly very little. Opt for the train where possible.
2. Use a car as little as possible or make use of a car share.
3. Travel on public transport or cycle over short distances.
4. Always ask yourself if there might be a more sustainable option for getting from A to B. It is often a more pleasant and healthier option too!

4. HOME AND ENERGY CONSUMPTION

In this last chapter, we focus on the energy consumption that takes place at home. According to **European data**, *gas is the largest source of energy for European households, followed by electricity and renewables such as solar panels and windmills. Gas provides over 30% of the total energy whilst electricity and renewables provide 25% and 20%. At the same time, most energy by far (over 60%!) is spent to heat homes and spaces. The heating of water and the use of electricity for lighting and appliances follow with both using about 15% of the energy. Naturally, this results in high CO2 emissions. High time to look into the impact in more detail and how we can reduce it!*

(IN)VISIBLE IMPACT

We like having a place where we can be ourselves, withdraw when we want peace and quiet and invite friends and relax. Our living space is therefore one of our most important spaces. To make the space warmer, we use gas. For lighting or air conditioning, we use electricity and for cooking and washing, we use water. It will therefore come as no surprise that a household consumes a lot of energy and it is thus important for a house to be as sustainable as possible and for the people who live there to consciously make more sustainable choices.

WATER

You use water when you shower and when you wash the dishes or do the laundry. In the section on clothing, we mentioned that washing some fabrics increases the amount of plastic in the sea. People waste water when more water than necessary

is used to get something clean. Think, for example, about half-filling the washing machine and putting on the dishwasher when it is not yet full. The machine might be only half-full but the same amount of water is used, which is a shame!

The same applies to showering. If you shower longer than necessary, a lot of water is wasted. According to various studies, the average household showers for 9 minutes per person, while 5 minutes is actually long enough. However, a shower is certainly more economical than a bath. While one shower lasting 9 minutes uses around 70 litres of hot water, taking a bath uses almost twice that!

GAS AND OIL

In Europe, we often rely on gas or oil to heat our houses and the water that we use. Unfortunately, our use is often unsustainable and a lot of energy gets lost in poor isolation of homes, in warming or cooling houses and heating water. If you take a hot shower, you do not just consume water. You also use the gas or oil needed to heat the water to the right temperature. Cold showers are the best solution, but showering for a shorter time or at lower temperature makes a difference. By making small adjustments you can use a little less energy. Think also about putting on a jumper when you are cold or putting an extra blanket on the bed at night before turning on the heating.

ELECTRICITY

Finally, we use a lot of electricity in our homes, for our televisions, computers, charging mobile devices and, of course, light. Much of this consumption is also directly **visible.** If you turn on your television to watch a film or if you play a game on your Playstation, you are using electricity. When the film is over or you have finished gaming, the devices are turned off and you no longer consume any electricity.

However, in some cases there is also a **hidden impact.** If you send a message or stream a video on Netflix or YouTube, you use more energy than just the electricity needed to charge your mobile. These messages and streams are sent, received and stored by massive **data servers** (see illustration). These servers collect the data of millions of devices and therefore use a large amount of energy. Although it is difficult to work out the precise costs, it is useful to bear in mind that you have less of an adverse impact on the climate if you make less use of apps or if you play a board game with family or friends rather than stream a movie.

'KEEN ON GREEN!'

At your age, you obviously pay less attention to energy consumption at home. After all, you do not pay the bills for all that energy and water! However, you can still make a real difference by making small adjustments to your behaviour.

Explore:
Explore the 24 tips for a more sustainable home. See the flyer that belongs to this teaching module.

Within the home, there are many ways in which we have a direct and indirect impact on the climate. On the one hand, it is difficult to see exactly how much water, gas and electricity you are using. On the other hand, it means that you can use water, gas and electricity more sustainably in many different ways. Based on various climate websites, a designer gathered and published a flyer with 24 examples of large savings, small adjustments and simple tips to make a building more sustainable. This flyer is added to this module separately. You will use these 24 tips to complete the assignment and the end of the section.

What is great about these tips is that many of them are not just relevant to a house, but to your school building or the canteen at your sports club as well. Of course, it is not just up to you to decide how you can make your house, school or canteen more sustainable. Therefore we would like to encourage or challenge you, above all, to talk about this with your friends, neighbours, other members of your household or a teacher. If everyone is aware of how we can improve sustainability, we can make a huge difference together. And by starting small but thinking big, young people can have just as positive an impact on the climate as Greta Thunberg or Boyan Slat.

YOU ARE IN CHARGE!

ASSIGNMENT:

First, take a good look at the 24 tips for a more sustainable home and think about what you can do yourself. Then sit down at the table with the other members of your household and discuss the sustainability situation in your house. Finally, look at what savings and adjustments you can make so that your house becomes more sustainable.

Discuss the outcome with your classmates when you are back at school. Can you come up with a plan together to make your school more sustainable?

Top tips:

1. Shower for a shorter time and with cold water.
2. Put on a jumper or put an extra blanket on the bed at night before turning up the heating.
3. Play a board game with your family once a week instead of streaming a film or gaming.
4. Along with other members of your household, look for ways to make your house more sustainable.
Use the 24 tips in the flyer as a checklist.

'KEEN ON GREEN!' THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE.

We hope that the various sections of this booklet have given you a better understanding of the visible and invisible impact that people have on the climate. It is even more important, however, that you now feel inspired to get started on making your own choices to make your own environment more sustainable. As promised, we want to challenge you to take action. We will explain below how to take part and what is expected of you. We will also explain what you should think about when coming up with your idea and when you put it into practice.

THE CHALLENGE

In a group of a minimum of two school students, but preferably more, draw up a plan of how you will make your environment more sustainable with the assistance of your classmates, and carry out that plan. The environment is your school, your neighbourhood, your sports club, but the plan can also be for the whole town or city, the country or even the whole of Europe. Whatever level you choose, the aim is to come up with as detailed a plan as possible to make the chosen environment sustainable. The plan may be a very detailed idea, but it may also be many ideas that together form a whole.

Note!

Ideas relating to your own behaviour are obviously important, but the challenge is primarily concerned with ideas that have a broader impact, for example for your house, school, neighbourhood, or perhaps even the town or city, the country or the whole of Europe! If you want to become a vegetarian, for example, that is great. But, to make this choice count for the challenge, it is important that you come up with a plan to make even more people become vegetarians. Convince your school canteen to offer only vegetarian meals, for example.

In the plan, you should explain what you want to do, where and when you intend to put the plan into action, and what assistance and materials you need for it. After consulting your teacher, you put this plan into practice. You then produce a report on the execution of your plan. If the plan is for the whole of Europe, test it out on a small scale. If this is not possible, find scientific or practical evidence that it will work. Your school may organize a competition so that every group can compete for the best idea, but we leave that up to every school. (Ask your teacher whether this competition will take place!).

THE ASSESSMENT

After you submitted your reports, your teacher or a jury will assess your plan and execution. They will judge your efforts based on three factors.

1. **Feasibility**
2. **Impact**
3. **Originality**

In assessing **feasibility**, the jury will look at whether the idea can be successfully put into practice by you or your group. Is it clear what you want to achieve? Is it clear how you intend to achieve your aim or aims? Explain clearly what you need or who you need help from. But also: have you succeeded in putting your plan into action? How did it go? Was the execution of the plan a success?

To assess **impact**, the jury looks at the strength and breadth of the idea. Is the idea inspirational, for example? Does it challenge other people to start thinking about sustainability and their own impact on the climate? In addition, the jury will look at how many people your idea reaches. Is it just your family or your entire school or your town? The report on the plan and the report on how it is put into practice will also be examined. To what extent the execution of the plan matches the original idea is of key importance.

Finally, the jury will also assess the **originality** of your plan. It is, of course, difficult to say in advance what makes an idea original. But some significant factors are whether the idea already exists and, if so, whether your idea applies the existing idea in a new way and/or addresses its weak points. Your idea therefore does not need to be completely new, but if you use an existing idea, it is important to try to add something new or adapt the existing idea to a new location. Making your canteen vegetarian is one such idea. Eating a vegetarian diet is not a new idea, but promoting it in a fun way in your school canteen or sports club can be original.

By focusing closely on these three points, the jury will assess the ideas and put them in one of four groups:

1) If an idea has low feasibility and little impact, we will say that It's a Good Start but could be improved.

2) Plans that have good feasibility but little impact will be in the group 'Small Steps Also Count'. This includes, for example, eating less meat or picking up all the litter in your neighbourhood

3) Plans that have a high impact but are difficult to put into action will be classed as Ambitious. Think, for example, about making all the houses in your street sustainable or producing a viral video urging others to start making their lives sustainable.

4) Finally, there will be plans that have high feasibility and high impact. Ideas like this are A Golden Opportunity to do something good for our planet and will be assessed very positively. So get started!

Are you unsure how your plan will turn out? No problem. It's the overall picture that counts. Originality has not been included in this overview, simply because it is so difficult to assess it in advance.

It is up to you to decide what medium to use to present your plan. It may be a report, but it could also be a poster or even a video. Be creative, because that is part of how originality is assessed!

So get to work quickly in the mindset of 'keen on green', think up a plan with your classmates and put it into action.

We wish you every success, and remember:

YOU(TH) ARE IN CHARGE!

At a glance:

What? - We challenge you to make your environment sustainable.

How? - Think up a plan for how to make your environment sustainable and put your plan into action. Produce a report on the plan and how it is put into practice.

With whom? - Form a group with your classmates. Every group has to submit one report, but that report may consist of a collection of plans.

When? - The report on the plan and its implementation should be submitted with your teacher. They may ask you to present it. Or the school may organize a competition around the challenge with a fixed deadline for submissions.

Why? - For a better climate, of course!

'KEEN ON GREEN' - STEP-BY-STEP

We have shown in the module that there are many different ways of achieving sustainability and many different areas in which it can be done. We challenged you to take action for the climate and we provided you with information in the module on the goal of the challange, but in this step-by-step plan we give you detailed instructions on how to approach your participation. By following these steps, you can make sure that your idea, how it is put into action and the report on the idea and its implementation are suitable for the challange. We wish you every success, and remember:

YOU(TH) ARE IN CHARGE!

STEP 1: THE BEGINNING

You have, in fact, already taken the first step. That was to read the climate module and carry out each assignment at the end of the chapter. If you have not yet carried out all the assignments, do so before going any further. The assignments give you a much better idea of everything that is possible and how to achieve it in a relatively short time.

Right. You have completed the assignments and now it really is your turn. Before starting on this challenge, it is important to think about how you intend to approach it with your classmates. We advise you to work with at least one other person on an idea, but a group of four or five, or even a whole class, is even better. This makes it easier to divide the tasks and carry out a larger plan.

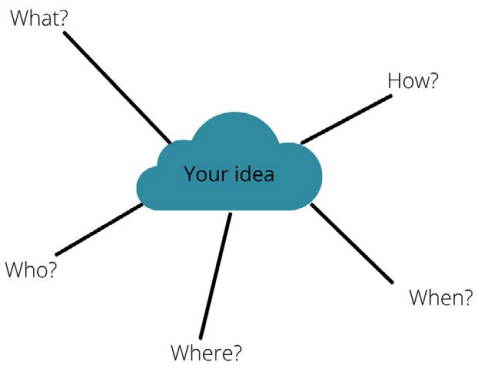
STEP 2: A GOOD PLAN REDUCES THE WORK BY HALF

Now that you have formed groups, you can start thinking about your plan. Take plenty of time because good planning saves a lot of work later.

2a. Start by discussing the module and which topic you found most enjoyable.

2b. Choose the area in which you want to implement an idea on sustainability. For example, food, clothing or energy use.

2c. Come up with all kinds of ideas, big and small, for improving sustainability in the area you have chosen. **Brainstorm** with one another about it. No idea is too crazy at this point. Later you will decide which ideas are actually good, not feasible or have too little impact.



2d. When you have run out of new ideas, decide on the idea which you think is best. Think about the assessment criteria of **feasibility and impact.** Is the plan easy to carry out or difficult? Does the plan reach a lot of people? When is the execution of the plan a success?

2e. When you have chosen one or two ideas to continue working on, have another brainstorming session. This time, however, the emphasis is on the details. Look for ways of putting the idea into practice.

TIP: Brainstorm by searching for answers to the WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHO and HOW questions. You need the answers to these questions to be able to understand your plan properly, present it well and successfully implement it.

1. What do you want to achieve? What is your aim? What do you need?

2. Where do you want to put the idea into action??

3. When do you want to put the idea into action? How will you arrange a location or promote the idea?

4. How do you want to put the idea into action? Hoe gaan jullie een locatie regelen of het idee promoten?

5. Who among you is doing what? What do you need help with and who can you ask for help? Think, for example, about your teacher or a parent.

2f. While you are brainstorming, write down all the ideas, questions and answers. Use the word field below as an example of how to do this.

2g. If you get stuck, ask some more what, who, where, when and how questions. In that way you can always search again for the details that

make the plan clearer not only to you but to others as well.

2h. Once you have written down an idea in the smallest steps possible, write them out neatly. Indicate first what your aim is and then how you intend to achieve this aim. This is the **action plan.** The action plan explains where and when you intend to carry out the plan, who does what and what things you need to put the plan into action. At the end of this document you will find a template for the action plan that you can fill in **(Annex 1)**.

2i. Finally, submit the plan to your teacher for approval. This can be done by discussing it, asking the teacher to read your action plan or by making a brief presentation to the class.

2j. After the **action plan** has been approved, you can start putting it into action. You should obviously make sure to answer any comments or questions from your teacher or schoolmates.

STEP 3: READY, SET, GO!

With the action plan in your hand, and after the teacher has approved your idea and approach, the time has come to put it into practice. Because every idea, and therefore every plan, is different, it is difficult to write a step-by-step plan for every option. There are nevertheless a few general points you can bear in mind.

It is important to remember that preparing and executing a plan often takes longer than you might imagine. Unexpected things can also happen that force you to make adjustments.

So make sure you start in good time and are prepared to improvise if necessary. On top of that, maintain good communication with one another and ensure that you all stick to the deadlines set out in the plan. Remind each other of deadlines and tell each other when and why a particular task has not been completed on the agreed day, if necessary. Ask for help from your fellow group members, parents / family members / household members or the teacher in good time if you run into problems.

TIP 1: Consider whether photographs need to be taken or videos need to be shot during or after the event. You can use these again for your report. Respect the privacy rules that apply, so always ask the person you are videoing or photographing for their permission.

TIP 2: Keep a log of your activities. Accurately writing down what you have done on a daily or weekly basis not only makes it easier to check whether everything is running smoothly. It also makes it easier for you to give examples of what you have done when writing up the report.

STEP 4: THE REPORT

You have come up with a super plan and it has been put into practice. Great! To complete the challange, you need to do one more thing and that is to produce the **final report**. The final report is split into two parts. The first part is the action plan that you have already written. The action plan reproduces, as it were, what your idea was, what you intended to achieve and how you set about doing it.

The second part of the final report is the report on the execution of the plan. This includes a look back at the preparations ('who did what and how did it go?') and a summary of the execution of your plan or the event you organised ('how did it go and what has been achieved?'). A good way of doing this is taking an honest look back at the action plan and then indicating what went as expected, what went better than expected and what proved more difficult. You will then know for sure that you are including the most important parts of your plan and execution in both the action plan and the final report. Make sure that you also address things you had not thought of earlier, but that still happened during preparation or execution. Annex 2 provides an overview of what **the final report** should look like.

In practical terms, this means taking the following steps:

4a. You take photographs or shoot a video during the preparation and implementation of your plan. These can be used to show everything that you have done and what the result has been.

You also keep a daily or weekly log of your activities and progress.

4b. After your plan has been put into practice, you discuss with one another how it went. Are you satisfied? Did anything go wrong? What have you achieved? What are your observations about the event or activity? Did everyone participate without any problems? Did the participants learn something new?

4c. With the log in your hand, you write down what you have all done. Try to answer the **who, what, where, when and how** questions again, and make sure you touch on all these points in the summary.

4d. You then look back at the action plan. Compare your original plan with its eventual execution. What went as expected and what went differently? Write it down. Be honest and indicate what you have learnt. It is likely that not everything went well, and there is nothing wrong with that. What is more important is that you came up with solutions and found a way of successfully implementing your plan. Do you have any observations about the event or outcome of the activity that you organized? Was it successful, and why.

4e. Now add to your report your reflections on the action plan, the summary of what you did, and the videos and photographs you took. Use the template in **Annex 2**. for the final report

4f. Hand in the final report to the teacher. The teacher may add some comments to make the report better or more complete. Incorporate the comments if necessary and hand the final report in again for final approval.

4g. *It is up to your school whether they would like to set up a competition in which the groups compete for the best idea to make their school, neighbourhood, city, country or Europe more sustainable. Ask your teacher whether this competition will take place!*

ANNEX: ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

This template provides an idea of what questions you need to answer at the end of the brainstorming sessions and before you start carrying out the plan. N.B. This list is not complete, and there will no doubt be questions you should add yourself. To give you some additional help, we have given a sample answer for each question. Our example idea is a clothes swap at school.

THE WHAT:

- The area you want to make more sustainable:

  * Example: clothing

- The aim you want to achieve:

  * Example: make others aware of buying and using second-hand clothes

- Your idea to achieve the aim:

  * Example: a clothes swap

THE HOW:

- The way in which you will promote the idea::

  * Example: putting up posters in the school corridors

THE WHERE:

- In what location do you want to put the idea into action?

  * Example: your school

THE WHEN:

- On what date do you want to put the idea into action?

  * Example: 9th November

- On what date do you want to start making preparations?

  * Example: 9th October, one month before the event takes place

- On what date do you want to finish the preparations?

  * Example: 2nd November, one week before the event takes place

THE WHO?

The who is perhaps the most variable of all the components. The who depends greatly on how many people you have in the group. The more people in your group, the more important it is to agree clearly on who is to do what and by when! We have given some examples below based on a clothing swap at school that you could all think about. We assume that we have four people in our group: Marco, Fatima, Elena and Quincy.

WHO DOES WHAT:

- Making posters to advertise the event: Marco and Fatima.
- Contacting the teacher or school management to ask for permission to use the hall for the clothes swap: Quincy
- Setting up and decorating the hall: Quincy and Elena
- Taking photographs during the clothes swap for the report: Marco
- Inviting a local vintage shop at the end of the day to take away the clothes that are not swapped: Fatima
- Clearing up the hall after the clothes swap: Marco and Elena
- etc.

ANNEX: FINAL REPORT TEMPLATE

School:

Group members:

Idea, aim:

Where and when:

Summary of the preparations:

Think about: Who did what? When was what done? How did it go?

Summary of the execution:

Think about: Who did what? When was what done? How did it go? Was the event or plan successful? How many people did you reach?

Looking back on the action plan, including conclusions and recommendations for next time:

Think about: What went as expected? What went differently than expected? Did you achieve the original aim? Why/why not? What do you want to do differently next time? What is the most important thing that you have learned?

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The Hague, July 2022

YOUR TURN!

Use the last pages of this booklet to write down your ideas for the climate challenge.

YOU(TH) ARE IN CHARGE!


YOU ARE IN
CHARGE!