



THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Sustainable development concerns everyone, but young people and youth organisations play several unique and important roles in the move towards a more sustainable future, both as agents for change and as rights-holders in the change process:

1. THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

Young people have the right to participate in the decisions shaping their own future. The right to participate is anchored in the 2030 Agenda, which acknowledges youth as "critical agents of change".

2. ENERGY, CREATIVITY AND MOTIVATION

Young people possess the energy, creativity and motivation to challenge current unsustainable models. Less bound by ideological and institutional structures, young people are able to think outside the box and develop innovative solutions for society as a whole.

3. YOUTH ORGANISATIONS ARE CENTRAL ACTORS

Youth organisations are central actors in the work for sustainable development, channelling young people's efforts through youth work and non-formal education, and amplifying youth voices to collectively push for sustainable development.

4. AT THE FRONTLINE OF THE IMPACTS

Young people are at the frontline of the impacts of unsustainable models. Young people are disproportionately affected by the serious economic, social, political and environmental problems inherited from previous generations.

5. INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Youth organisations can champion intergenerational solidarity for other organisations to follow suit, representing the interests of future generations of young people and their capacity to achieve the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms.

6. WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY

Through the framework of sustainable development, youth organisations can explore interconnections between policy areas as well as the long-term impacts of actions, to work more effectively towards multiple ends.

This call to action is based on policy positions adopted by the Member Organisations and the Board of the European Youth Forum. The European Youth Forum is the platform of youth organisations in Europe. We represent more than 100 youth organisations, which bring together tens of millions of young people across Europe.

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BLUEPRINT FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

A vision from young people for a sustainable Europe and a sustainable world

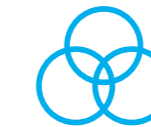
Today, young people must grapple with serious problems inherited from their elders such as persisting poverty, rampant inequality and climate change. Yet, young people are lacking the space to challenge the status quo in adult-centric public policies and social norms. Young people possess the energy, creativity and passion to create a sustainable Europe. The European Youth Forum seeks to empower young people as agents of their own, sustainable future. We should never underestimate the power of a young generation to change the rules!

2030 AGENDA

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals are the best tool we have to achieve a sustainable future.

To make use of this tool and to take the "bold and transformative steps" that are needed for a more sustainable world, Europe needs the right policies and a conducive institutional environment that is created with young people and for young people, with the overarching goal of sustainable development.

The European Youth Forum calls on the European institutions and the Member States to adopt overarching and comprehensive strategies and policies based on the following principles:



INTEGRATE THE THREE DIMENSIONS

Comprehensive strategies for sustainable development and implementation of the 2030 Agenda must integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development: society, environment and the economy.



IN-DEPTH GAP ANALYSIS

Strategies should be underpinned by an in-depth gap analysis of existing policy frameworks, processes and mechanisms.



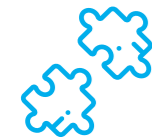
ALTERNATIVE MEASURES OF PROGRESS

Alternative measures of progress in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should become the new yardstick for success for European decision-makers.



UNIVERSAL

An overarching strategy needs to be universal within the competences of European government institutions at all levels. Strategies must mainstream sustainable development into all governmental institutions.



POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) must be fully incorporated in strategies oriented towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



MEASURES FOR ALL VULNERABLE GROUPS

Strategies must include specific measures for all vulnerable groups, including young people.



PROCESSES FOR PARTICIPATION

There must be new and meaningful ways for young people and youth organisations to participate in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda by establishing appropriate, binding and inclusive processes for participation.



ADEQUATE RESOURCES

Governments need to ensure that adequate resources are collected and channelled towards sustainable ends.

THE CURRENT UNSUSTAINABLE PARADIGM

ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

Today, humanity uses on average 1.6 planet Earths to provide resources and absorb our waste in an ever-growing economy.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

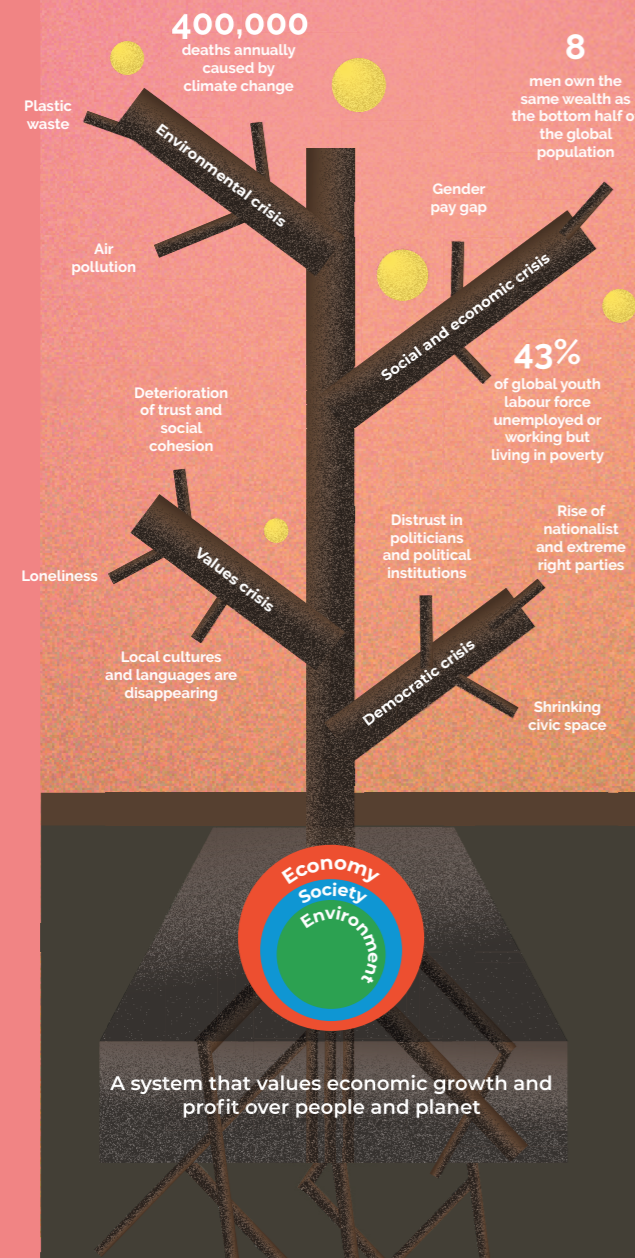
Inequality, which disproportionately affects certain groups, such as youth and women, is built into our economic system and preserved over generations due to the inheritance of wealth for some and the exclusion of others.

VALUES CRISIS

The current system promotes values of individualism, competition and materialism in the quest for increasing profits.

DEMOCRATIC CRISIS

Current paternalistic and oligarchic systems are unwilling to share power, and promote economic growth over the wellbeing of citizens.



A system that values economic growth and profit over people and planet

HOW TO CHANGE: 5 ALTERNATIVE MODELS

ALTERNATIVES

01 NEW ECONOMY

The new economy comprises a multitude of different ways of organising the economy, based on more democratic structures in which people have a stronger ownership of public goods, communities, and their working lives.

Changing the logic of organisation at the local level to one based on democracy and empowerment can be a real game changer and eventually be scaled up and transform our economy to one that works for everyone, including future generations.

ACTIONS FROM GOVERNMENTS

- Support the movement by setting the right policy conditions for alternative economic models
- Encourage and support education, training and information provision to improve understanding among all stakeholders of new sustainable economic models

The European Youth Forum has identified five areas where alternative approaches have the potential to result in great progress towards a sustainable future. Actions from governments and institutions are urgently needed to promote these alternatives.

02 A MORE EQUAL SOCIETY

Through reforms in the economic system that will lead to a fair distribution of resources in society and the inclusion of marginalised groups.

Reducing inequality can increase systemic resilience, address social ills, as well as provide the most direct way to poverty reduction. Societies with lower inequality generally experience lower insecurity, higher health and happiness levels.

- Design a fairer economy from the start through policies regulating quality jobs with decent wages and working conditions, and the promotion of workers' organisations
- Implement measures that ensure a sustainable and socially just allocation of profits

- Place restrictions on unsustainable practices that overexploit natural resources
- Reform tax to clamp down on tax avoidance and tax evasion
- Adopt regulations to prevent political capture
- Invest new returns in policies that benefit young people

03 SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

A just transition to a circular economy embedded in a larger shift to a critique of extractivism and a culture of sufficiency.

A new model of production based both on the sufficiency and efficiency principle could have a transformative effect beyond environmental challenges, such as employment and increased environmental consciousness.

- Implement circular economy strategies applying the principles of reduce, reuse, repair, recycle, in that order
- Place restrictions on unsustainable practices and put in place more efficient sanctioning systems for environmental and human rights violations
- Foster and support innovation, and ensure access

- to sustainable practices
- Ensure a just transition through education, relocation and retirement options and secure the funding of those measures
- Recognise the limits of market solutions for environmental problems due to the intrinsic value of our natural resources

04 NEW FORMS OF DEMOCRACY

Structural change towards a democracy where young people have a real say and youth activism and mobilisation is recognised as a legitimate form of political participation, not contested.

Supported through quality education for sustainable development, both formal and non-formal, deliberative and participatory models for the democratic participation of young people have the potential to lead the impetus for change needed for sustainable development.

- Promote dialogue around the fundamental questions concerning sustainable development
- Ensure the presence of a diverse group of young people in key political bodies and seek the opinions and voices of the young people who are furthest behind

- Recognise alternative forms of political participation beyond voting as legitimate
- Create new participatory and deliberative mechanisms and structures
- Invest in quality education, both formal and non-formal, for sustainable development

05 ALTERNATIVE MEASURES OF PROGRESS

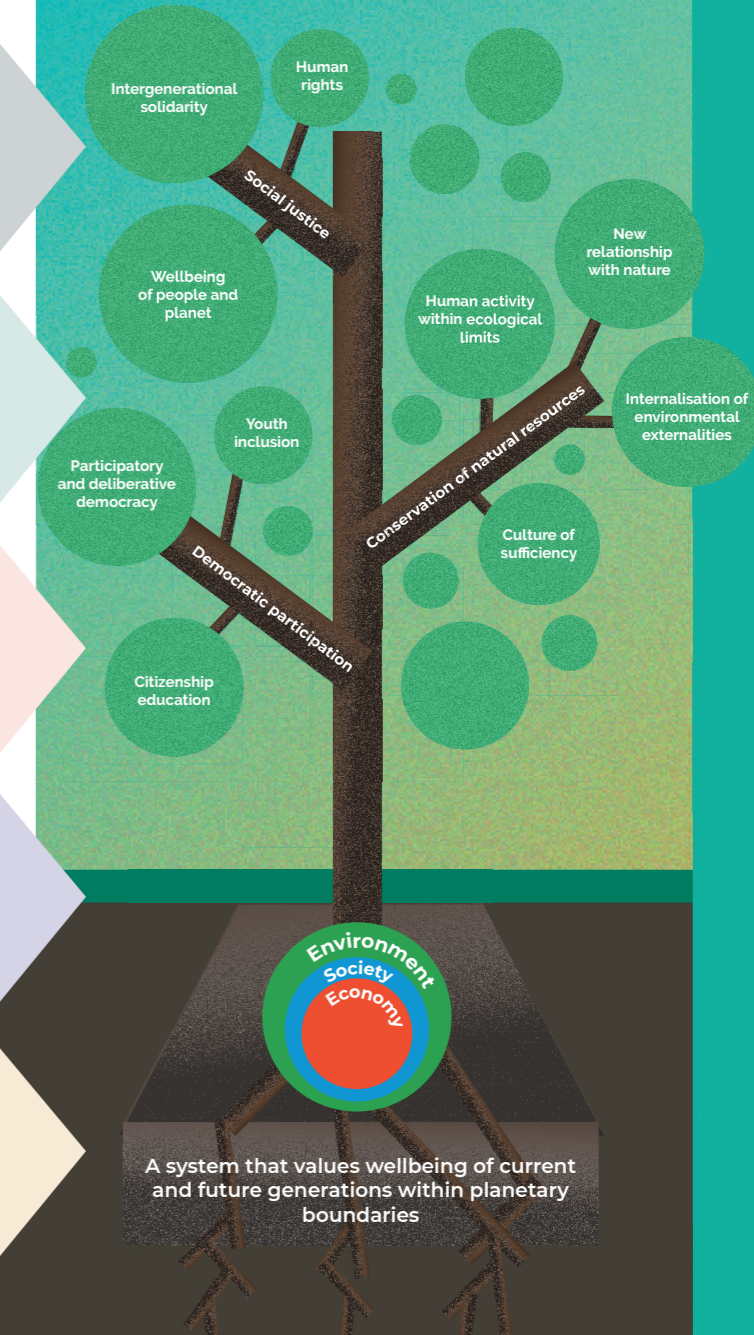
Use of alternative indicators measuring 'wellbeing' or 'welfare' of both people and the planet must replace GDP, which is ill-suited to measuring progress.

Replacing GDP as the dominant indicator of progress can put a halt to the pursuit of unsustainable economic growth and pave the way for more sustainable models of progress.

- Initiate a fundamental debate on what progress means and how society can be structured towards the achievement of collective wellbeing

- Adopt alternative measures of progress based on sustainable development and the real wellbeing of people and planet

THE SUSTAINABLE PARADIGM



A system that values wellbeing of current and future generations within planetary boundaries

SOCIAL JUSTICE

A rights-based approach that incorporates solidarity among young people, intergenerational solidarity, respect for human dignity and a fair distribution of resources. The wellbeing of people and planet should be the ultimate goal of economic and social systems.

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

A renewed relationship with nature and a culture of sufficiency. New institutions and models to ensure that human activities operate within ecological limits. Prosperity is separated from resource use and negative environmental externalities are internalised.

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Inclusive, participatory and deliberative political models. New models encourage and reward participation by citizens, in particular youth and youth organisations, at all stages and all levels of decision-making, in line with a rights-based approach and supported through citizenship education.