



www.youthxchange.net - towards sustainable lifestyles

youthXchange

training kit on responsible consumption - THE GUIDE



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

THE GUIDE

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



United Nations
Educational,
Scientific
and Cultural
Organization



United
Nations
Environment
Programme

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

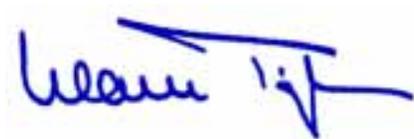
As the environmental conscience of the UN, the UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) underlines the importance of and the urgent need for a worldwide change in consumption and production patterns and attitudes.

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

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

Klaus Töpfer
Executive Director UNEP

Koichiro Matsuura
Director-General UNESCO





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Introducing sustainable consumption

SC as we will refer to it.

This definition which is still widely accepted today originates from the Brundtland Report (Gro Harlem Brundtland et al., Our Common

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

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

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

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