

# *Green Change*

**Tips and Tricks for recycle, reduce and reuse**

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## Tips and Tricks for recycle, reduce and reuse



The three Rs... reduce, reuse, recycle

Every year many people throw away billions of food and drink cans, glass bottles and jars, millions of plastic and metal jar and can covers. More than 30% of our waste is packaging materials.

It takes resources to manufacture and transport all products, even those made from recycled content. For example: one of the growing concerns is that the number of plastics finding their way into our oceans and lakes.

More often, though, it is greener to follow the old dictum: reduce, reuse and recycle.

Recycling more at home does not require much effort if you spend some time to create a comprehensive recycling system.

For example: having places to store our recycled materials in the house (box, bin, bag ...etc) and keep these containers next to the trash can. There are so many and easy ways that shows you how to recycle more effectively.



- All plastic bottles, papers, aluminium, glass can be recycled, so you should put them into their own container.
- Many electronic stores take back certain items and provide a credit
- Do not waste the water. You can easily use the used water, like pouring it from cooking pasta directly into a flower bed.
- Compost your food. Organic matter is the greatest source of methane emission
- Buy recycled products to using your dollars to vote for greener business practices

Reuse is when a product is used again in the same form and for the same purpose. It is one of the best ways to stop waste, and there are tons of opportunities to put it into practice every day.

- First of all, you should buy reusable products. For example, use washable cloth napkins, sponges, and dish cloths.
- Purchase refillable items.
- Use Rechargeable Batteries.
- Bring your reusable shopping bag to the grocery store and beyond. If you do have single use bags, use them again!
- Donate your old clothes, books and working electrical equipment to charity so somebody else can reuse them.
- Reuse stationery items at work (folders, paper clips, rubber bands, packaging etc) and use wastepaper for scrap/note paper.

The abstract idea of reducing one's waste can be overwhelming, but a great place to start is within the comfort of your own home. Little changes such as switching to cloth bags instead of plastic ones or making a concerted effort to recycle cans and bottles can make a big difference in your waste output.



The best way to reduce our trash problem is to simply consume less. Much of what we buy in the developed world we don't really need.

One of the simplest ways to decrease the amount of waste you produce is to use reusable bags while shopping. Compost yard waste which also helps enrich the soil and reduces water run-off. Purchase foods in bulk or those which use less packaging.

The second-best approach to reducing trash is to reuse, repurpose, upcycle, give away or Freecycle things when they can no longer serve their original purpose. Anything that we can give a second or third life to will reduce the burden of trash upon the globe.

**Petra Règner**

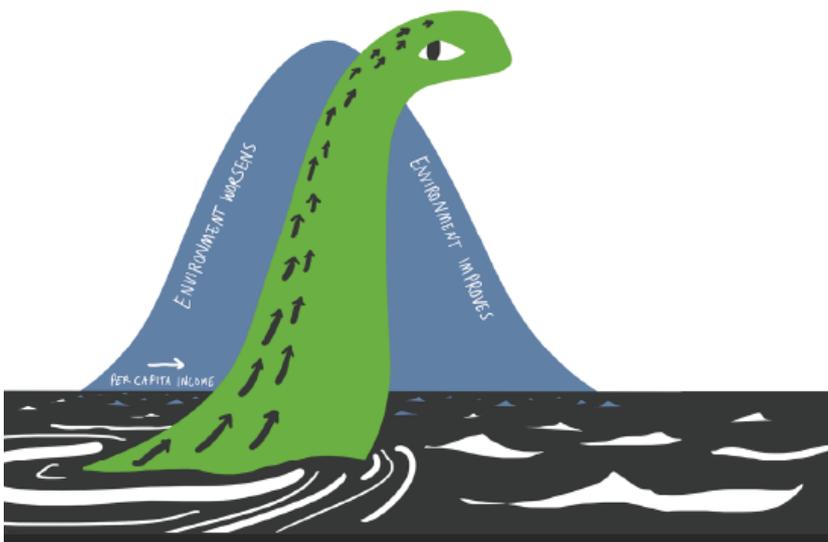
## Economy Should Thrive, Not Grow

The modern concept of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been attacked by multiple criticisms ever since its development in 1934. Nevertheless, the world seems to turn around the goal of making it bigger, as if it was all that matters.

Economic growth, indeed, helps to solve problems like unemployment, but what is the true cost of it? And is there any other way to achieve, for example, the aim of a higher employment rate?

GDP is not a good index of the well-being of a nation or of its society for many reasons. Given that it is, essentially, the sum of the prices of all final goods and services produced during a period of time, car accidents or being stuck in the traffic jam would rise this indicator. But are people involved in these events happier? Is producing and selling weapons contributing to build a better world? Or, is food waste another smart way to raise our national GDP?

Probably, we would better rethink the way we assess how a country is doing well. An essay by Wilkinson and Pickett titled *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better* shows how beyond a certain threshold of GDP a further increase in it does not play a role in many other indexes of wellness or quality of life (e.g., mental health, social mobility and educational performance). Rather, these social outcomes correlate strongly with countries' levels of economic inequality.



Another research by the European Environmental Bureau entitled *Decoupling Debunked* discusses arguments and evidence supporting why the “green growth” cannot be the sole strategy used to tackle environmental impacts.

Decoupling of economic growth from environmental pressures seems to be an unrealistic scenario for at least seven reasons:

- 1- Resources extraction is going to become more and more expensive leading to a raise in environmental degradation per unit of resource extracted;
- 2- Improvements in efficiency are often compensated by a reallocation of the same money or resources to either other impactful consumptions or more of the same consumption;
- 3- While solving one environmental problem via technological solutions other problems may be intensified or created;
- 4- The impact of the service economy might be underestimated: given that services can exist only on top of the material economy they have a significant footprint that adds to that of goods;
- 5- Recycling has a limited potential in that it needs a lot of raw materials and energy;

- 6- The factors of production that play an important role for environmental sustainability are not tackled appropriately and sufficiently by technological change;
- 7- Externalisation of ecological impacts from high-consumption countries to low-consumption ones can only account for an apparent decoupling of economic growth from environmental pressures.

A new paradigm based on a downscale in economic production and consumption may be the only feasible way to tackle the environmental crisis we are facing. Sufficiency policies should be prioritised on efficiency-oriented measures.

As Kate Raworth states in her TED Talk called *A healthy economy should be designed to Thrive, not grow*: “We're financially addicted to growth, because today's financial system is designed to pursue the highest rate of monetary return, putting publicly traded companies under constant pressure to deliver growing sales, growing market share and growing profits, and because banks create money as debt bearing interest, which must be repaid with more. We're politically addicted to growth because politicians want to raise tax revenue without raising taxes and a growing GDP seems a sure way to do that. [...] We urgently need financial, political and social innovations that enable us to overcome this structural dependency on growth, so that we can instead focus on thriving”. In order to meet every person needs for a life of dignity and opportunity within the means of the planet it is necessary to depart from the ever-rising line of GDP growth.

An example of what Maurizio Pallante calls the *Happy Degrowth* is capable of capturing the essence of this paradigm while explaining how it can create new job opportunities. While many buildings, especially in Italy (at least compared to Germany), perform poorly in thermic insulation a good idea could be investing in a renovation of the window fixtures so that in a short period of time the drop in expenses on heating could cover the initial cost of the intervention.

For an economy that should thrive instead of growing, a new paradigm based on a downscale in economic production and consumption is needed.

**Mirko Galardi**

## Man- friend or enemy of the environment?

Environment includes relief, air, water, vegetation and soil. These are the constituent parts of the environment on which man has intervened through his activities. Each element plays an essential role in creating the environment. At the same time, they are all connected to each other.



**Human impact on the environment**, also called anthropogenic impact on the environment, includes changes to biodiversity and natural resources. The society has modified the environment to satisfy the people's needs, causing severe effects such as pollution and deforestation. For example, problems like global warming and biodiversity loss represent an existential risk to human race. As we progress, we change the world in terrible ways. Human impact on the environment has become one of the main concerns of the 21st century.

Climate change represents the effect caused by the development of industry and technology. Human activities are modifying the natural greenhouse because of the burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil, increasing in this way the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). The consequences of changing the natural atmospheric greenhouse are serious and alarming. Since global temperatures increase, the weather will drastically change. Thus, some regions will have longer growing seasons, other will turn into barren wastelands because water will drain in large areas, transforming once floral regions into deserts. More intense hurricanes in both size and frequency will take place due to the increasing temperatures. In addition, more droughts are projected to be more intense. Air pollution affects not only the environment, but also humans. The rising temperatures are destroying delicate ecosystems, leading to asthma and cancer.



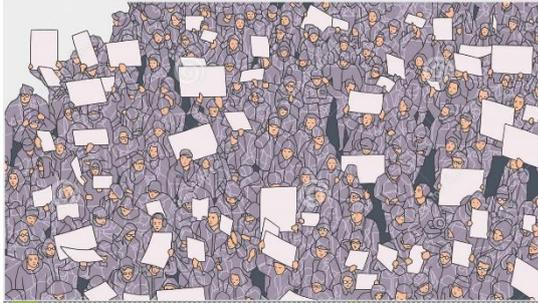
Climate changes are already affecting Europe in different ways, depending on the areas. These can lead to increased temperature and risk of desertification, higher level of precipitation and flood risks. The observed effects can affect the economy (for example, tourism and energy), the environment (biodiversity loss, forest fires), the agriculture (unproductive crops) and the human health (for example, more deaths caused by the water values, the damages caused by violent storms).

There are no perfect solutions, but we should start by eliminating the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, by consuming less, buying less stuff and planting trees.

**Lacatusu Izabela Cristina**

## Human rights for climate change

**Climate change**, specially human-made greenhouse gas emission is the primary cause of extreme weather conditions. Those conditions will be more frequent over time and lead to natural disasters,



rising sea levels, floods, heat waves, droughts, desertification, water shortage and the spread of tropical and vector-borne diseases. These changes are not just political or economic issues, they are also a human right issue because they lead to human right violations. As climate continues to change people will be forced to adjust, investing billions of dollars in infrastructure or migration. Those who have more money can afford to move out of harms way but those

who are historically neglected or marginalized in society will not have such good outcome. The most vulnerable groups will be the ones living in disadvantaged situation based on geography, poverty, gender, age, disability, cultural and ethic background. Human rights obligations apply to the goals and commitments of States in the area of climate change and require that climate actions should focus on protecting the rights if those most vulnerable. Only by integrating human rights in climate change actions and polices and empowering people to participate in policy formulation can States be successful. Since States consist of people, change should begin in individual level. Many people feel paralyzed when they think about climate change because it is such a big issue and it can feel like our individual actions will not make enough of a difference. That's why there have been developed „levers of power“ frameworks to help individuals identity concrete actions to take when they „choose to participate“.

Human rights regarding climate change:

- **Right to live**
- **Right to water and sanitation**
- **Right to food, health, self-determination, culture and development**

**The levers** include:

1. Government (National, State, Local)
2. Non-profit Organizations/Charities
3. Industry/Commercial Organizations
4. Professional Media
5. Social Media/Internet
6. Schools and Education
7. Influential Individuals (Authors, Lecturers, etc.)

If you ever think about taking an action on climate change or another issue that impact your community these levers can help you to make your first step to claim your human right. Because every impact for climate change is about our survival, not just about our future, our future generations but also about the lives that are being lost today and the people that are being displaced today.

**Monika Stipan**

## European Union environment strategy 2020

The Europe 2020 strategy is the EU's agenda for growth and jobs for the current decade. It emphasises smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as a way to overcome the structural weaknesses.

Europe will not achieve its 2030 goals without urgent action during the next 10 years to address the alarming rate of biodiversity loss, increasing impacts of climate changes and the overconsumption of natural resources.

It identifies three key objectives:

- to protect, conserve and enhance the „Union“ natural capital
- to turn the union into a resource efficient, green and competitive low carbon economy
- to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment – related pressures and risk to health and well being



Four so called „enablers“ will help Europe deliver on these goals:

- better implementation of legislation
- better information by improving the knowledge base
- more and wiser investment for environment and climate policy
- full integration of environmental requirements and considerations into other policies

Two additional horizontal priority objectives complete the programme:

- to make the union's cities more sustainable
- to help the Union's address international environmental and climate challenges more effectively

A principle priority, under the Europe 2020 strategy is to reduce dependence on imported energy resources, making ultimately the EU self sufficient in terms of energy. This is a very ambitious goal and can be pursued by means of technological improvements, major changes in manufacturing processing and agricultural production, in energy generation and in the transport systems. Although the overall goals set forth in the environmental policy are very ambitious, some progress is visible: recycling has become an everyday practice in the EU for many businesses and for millions of citizens, gas emissions have been reined in by 10% since 1990, and dependence on raw mineral resources tends to decline along with the development of alternative energy sources. Whether or not the goals of economic growth and simultaneous protection of the environment can be fulfilled will depend on the insistency that these goals are supported; on the creation of an effective framework for long-term review, formulation and implementation of related policies; and on the incorporation of environmental impact research and considerations into all EU policies.

## Green Crossword Puzzle

1. Useful possession/quality of a country, organization, person
2. Derived from living matter
3. The action of stopping something from happening
4. When you convert the waste into reusable material
5. Worthless material
6. It is one of the 3 components of the air
7. Result/effect
8. Involving or resulting from a reaction between 2 or more substances
9. The action of clearing a wide area of trees
10. Conducive to maintaining health and preventing diseases
11. When a sudden violent shaking of the ground

