
Be Eco Heroes!

A Manual for EYCE Member Organisations to
Become More Sustainable



EYCE *campaign to*
PROMOTE
ECOLOGICAL
JUSTICE



Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe

Be Eco Heroes!

Making EYCE More Sustainable

“We must become the change we want to see in the world”
– Ghandi

Have you ever thought of how much you can really influence people around you, your neighbourhood, your country and maybe even the world? The best way to bring about a change of something you care about is to truly believe in it and act as a good example.

We, ecumenical youth, truly believe that we should care about the Divine Creation which was given by God to people to dominate it, not exhaustively, but with respect for Creation itself and for future generations. In order to reverse the negative trend of disrespect in society nowadays, we can change our own personal attitudes, we can also become politically active and advocate for changing related political rules. Besides that, we can also change our organisation – our nearest colleagues and the image which we convey the world. An organisation could also become a good example for others.

In terms of EYCE's [Campaign to Promote Ecological Justice](#), one of our aims is exactly what is described above – to change our organisation in order to achieve bigger change in general. Among other activities of the campaign, we have been trying to challenge lifestyles of our followers with an aim to act in a more eco-friendly way. We also have been calling for a change in political agenda to achieve a more eco-just future. In order to complete our achievements, EYCE – the Brussels headquarters, as well as its member organisations, needs to identify ways of more sustainable and eco-friendly acting and change itself accordingly.

As expressed during EYCE's General Meeting in 2009 and confirmed in the meeting in 2011, the ecological justice is the most pressing topic for our member organisations in particular and for ecumenical youth in Europe in general. Therefore we call for all EYCE's member organisations to join the initiative and help us turning the network green by turning your own organisation green!

For the year 2013 EYCE is launching **Be Eco Heroes! – Making EYCE More Sustainable** – a project of greening its network. All member organisations are encouraged to participate and contribute by their activities to overall process of building more eco-just future.

The following several pages of this booklet will provide you with some basic information about the project. You will learn how your organisation can participate in the project and how more sustainable management could be achieved. We hope you will enjoy reading and it will motivate you joining the initiative. Your questions, comments and remarks are most welcome on campaign@eyce.org.

EYCE's Campaign Coordination Team

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Project description

Be Eco Heroes! is a coherent component of the EYCE's Campaign to Promote Ecological Justice. After exploring theological perspective on ecology in 2011, the campaign was focused on studying the complex reality in which ecological injustice is emerging. The focus of 2012 was on links among ecology, economy, society and politics. Based on the knowledge and motivation gained throughout past two years of the campaign, we are now moving to the last year with the topic of *sustainability*. As part of identifying and implementing ways of achieving sustainability, the idea of *Be Eco Heroes!* was developed.

The aim of this project is to make EYCE more sustainable. The *Be Eco Heroes!* is not only focused on EYCE in a narrow sense, as a Brussels headquarters, but as the whole network with all member organisations and its constituencies. We will try to identify the most harming consequences of our actions as well as the methods of mitigating that. Based on that, the concrete and achievable measurements will be implemented. Moreover, *Be Eco Heroes!* is also trying to find and implement the most suitable ways of positive contribution towards a more sustainable and eco-just society within the context, capacities and resources of each member organisation.

During the National Correspondents' meeting in Warsaw, October 2012, representatives from member organisations, the executive committee and the office staff of EYCE were working together on methodology of the project. Based on several case studies of different environmental management systems in churches across Europe, the participants identified the most suitable ways of management and implementation of the *Be Eco Heroes!*. Special attention was paid to the differences in size, resources, level of institutionalization, and other aspect of each organisation within the network. This document presents the outcomes of the work done in Warsaw and should serve as a manual which may help in turning your organisation green.

The timeframe of the implementation period of *Be Eco Heroes!* was envisaged for 2013. The work on the project is expected to start in February 2013 with the first round of evaluation in October 2013, during the next EYCE's General Meeting. As part of the General Meeting, a ceremony of certificate awarding will be held as recognition of those members who committed themselves to turn green. This will also be a great opportunity to share experience and encourage us to keep the commitment. Although the project is planned only for 2013, the General Meeting will evaluate the method and changes achieved so far and the possible continuation of the initiative will be considered.

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Management

Taking into account the vast difference among EYCE's member organisations, imposing any concrete standardised aims from above would not bear fruits. Instead, a loose and simple methodology of 'greening' an organisation was developed in Warsaw which allows each member organisation to turn themselves more sustainable with respect to their context, special needs, resources and capacities.

Having this notion in mind, from the Warsaw meeting a *three-phase methodology of greening EYCE* emerged. Firstly, an inventory of organisation's action and opportunities is done and based on that, concrete and achievable objectives are identified. Secondly, these objectives are implemented and thirdly, the evaluation of achievements is elaborated and a way forward is discussed. Therefore, the methodology, on the one hand, allows working on specific and concrete needs of each organisation. But on the other hand, all these specific local initiatives are connected and unified by the overall umbrella project which helps to motivate, support and empower organisations among themselves and thus multiply the effect.

Guidelines and Procedure

In order to give you more precise insight on how to proceed, the following action plan is suggested. The plan is composed of several steps which are based on the concept of the *three-phase methodology of greening EYCE*.

Preparation	Step 1 Commit your organisation to turn green	February – March 2013
	For the success of the overall project, there needs to be a will to change ourselves. We believe that ecological justice is a very important topic for young people, as well as for Christians in general. Therefore, being an ecumenical/Christian youth organisation already implies high expectation to join the initiative. However, participation on the project should be in consultation with the organisation's leaders. In case there is not overall content and the organisation as a whole is not willing to participate, maybe a smaller group of willing groups (e.g. several local youth groups in different cities, a certain group of willing parishes, or a specific group of volunteers etc.) could participate on the project.	

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Step 2 Establishing green committee

If the will and mandate *are* there, a sort of green committee should be established in order to coordinate the process. This does not mean that this committee will do all the work. The involvement should be as broad as possible. However a sort of management and responsibility assigned to a certain person is always helpful.

Please let the EYCE's Campaign Coordination Team know if this is done. Your commitment will be encouraging for other member organisations!

Step 3 Self evaluation

The green committee together with help of others should conduct a sort of inventory of the organisation with a special focus on ecological impact of your organisation on the environment. Please evaluate:

- 1) positive aspects of the impact (ways of compensating the harmful effects, or of positive influence on society), and
- 2) negative aspects of your ecological impact (environmentally harmful activities).

It is recommended to conduct inventory in all five content areas described below.

Phase 1

Step 4 Identify achievable objectives

Based on the inventory, identify opportunities for improving both impacts. Then convert selected opportunities into a concrete set of achievable objectives. In doing so, take into account your resources and capacities (financial, personal etc.). If you do not have resources or capacities needed for some kind of desirable achievement ask for external help (e.g. for an expert consultation in a partner organisation) it is recommended to start with simple and easy-to-do objectives which could ideally be developed within the suggested timeframe. If you succeed this time, you can continue with more ambitious objectives next time.

As soon as you have objectives developed, please let the Campaign Coordination Team know. Again, this will encourage our work as well as work of other members.

March – April 2013

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Phase 2	<p>Step 5 Implement the objectives</p> <p>Implement the objectives according to the plan developed in Step 4. If you are facing difficulties you cannot manage alone, ask for help - either ask EYCE and its members or a relevant partner in your country.</p> <p><i>Keep record and take pictures of your work. All your efforts are encouraging for others.</i></p>	March – September 2013
Phase 3	<p>Step 6 Evaluate objectives</p> <p>Come back to your initial inventory and try to evaluate how you have managed to improve the environmental impact of your action. For your future work it might be useful to also evaluate the way it was done. What was done effectively, what could be improved for the next time?</p> <p><i>Write a brief report about the achievements to the Campaign Coordination Team. The report does not need to be long. A few sentences and couple pictures are certainly enough! Send the report, not later than October 15th, 2013 to campaign@eyce.org. Based on the report, you will be rewarded with a certificate as recognition of your commitment to make your organisation more sustainable!</i></p> <p>Step 7 In the light of evaluating achievements done so far, elaborate an ecological inventory once again according to the Step 3 and continue from that point on!</p>	September – October 2013

Content Areas

To stop the explanation only on that general level might not be helpful. Therefore, the Warsaw meeting was *also the occasion to* work on concrete actions and tips which might be developed, maybe also in your organisation. Nevertheless, in order to keep the flexibility, these tips are by no means binding. The following chapters should serve you as an inspiration rather than a checklist where all points should to be achieved.

In order to give you an overview of all topics and aspects which might be considered while ‘greening’ your organisation, the five different content areas have been identified: Worship, Education, Hardware, Office and Transportation. The following five chapters will give you more insight in each of these content areas, provide you with practical tips to limit negative environmental impacts and tips of contributing positively to the environment. More resources and useful links will be available at www.eyce.org/campaign/be-eco-heroes. You are also

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encouraged to share resources you find by contacting the Campaign Coordination Team at campaign@eyce.org.

Worship

Any big change and far reaching decisions need to be rooted in values you truly believe in. First, before implementing any practical step, it is important to be sure that the project is consistent with our Christian values and Scripture. You can explore this aspect by organising some of the following activities with your community.

Practical hints

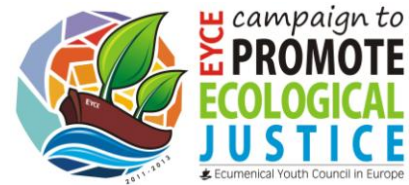
- Promote ecology and sustainability by worship or special spiritual gathering focused on care for creation. Several special days during a year could serve you as a perfect opportunity for this activity, e.g. Earth Day (22nd April).
- You can consider organising prayers or services in nature.
- Bible studies on the topic of eco-theology could help you a lot to understand more to the topic.
- Modesty is one of the core Christian values - you can encourage your community to fast for spiritual as well as ecological reasons.
- Study how to see the value of each person through sustainability which enables human dignity for future generations as well as for those affected already today.
- Provide your community with good material on the topic of eco-theology. A lot has already been written: gather it or translate it.
- Develop your own prayer/Bible study material on ecology or sustainability.

Education

We believe education is, if not the main, one of the most fundamental pillars to achieve sustainability. Indeed, raising and spreading awareness among people to explain the causes, reasons, aims and objectives of such an action is a definite to observe long-lasting commitments, both from individuals and communities. It is also the only way to make people responsible towards the environment and help them realise the vital need to turn green as soon as possible. Education only allows knowledge and know-how to pass on to other generations, which is one of the conditions to avoid an environmental crisis on a long-term. We choose to understand education here in its wide meaning, as it can be implemented through at different stages of life and in many different ways you can find out more about below.

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Practical hints

- Link education with worship, e.g. by a Bible study on consumerism vs. Creation or on the role of Christians in leading the movement of protecting God's Creation.
- Analyse ecological threats in your own context as well as on global level and convey the message to your constituency and to broader public.
- Develop guidelines on how an individual could protect the environment
- Give concrete, practical advice on how one could change his personal lifestyle.
- Organise (an) awareness-raising event(s) for your constituency or for general public.
- Display your success in reaching sustainability through a public event.
- Translate into your own language already existing educational awareness-raising materials, e.g. those developed by EYCE (the Leaf etc.).
- Organise (an) event(s) aiming at giving internal education to volunteers in your organisation.
- Consult local experts on sustainability to reach aims according to your context.

Hardware

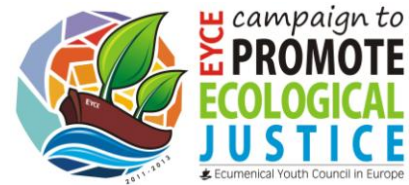
Sustainability implies the need to have an energy-saving behaviour and to think beyond the box to reflect on the consequences of our actions. However, purchasing and using energy-efficient goods are as important in the process of greening our ways of life. Becoming an Eco-Hero in our everyday habits demands an extra effort in changing our minds and preconceived ideas. To help you turn green in a smoother way, EYCE provides you with a list of small practical tips, which do not seem much, but represent the first crucial steps towards a more sustainable world.

Practical hints

- Don't use stand-by mode. That is still energy consuming: shut your machine off instead if you are not using it.
- Reduce waste and sort it out as much as possible (incl. organic).
- Turn off lights and computers etc when not needed.
- Get used to the idea that you don't need to use your computer all the time. Even in your office, there are other ways to keep on working without using a computer: organise actions such as daily/weekly happy hour, weekly 'Retro Day'.
- Consume water mindfully.
- Only use energy-saving electronic equipments. They are a profitable investment on the long-term.

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- Consider ‘green investments’ to reach energy saving. Before investing money in a new building or new equipment, thinking on the long-term to get long-lasting goods, better insulation etc.
- Check your electronic brand and their ethical policy; some do much more than others.
- Only buy new goods if really needed and not to get the latest/fastest version of a good you already have and still work.
- Change your electricity supplier to a green one, which are more and more affordable.
- Thinking outside the box: take into consideration the ecological cost of a product, including transportation etc.

Office

Another aspect of making your organization more sustainable is taking care of the eco-behaviours in the office. There are several facets of this issue. In each of the fields described be mindful about the fact that in general, consuming less is the most eco-friendly behaviour you can promote.

Consumables

- Make sure to reduce printouts.
- Try to use only certified paper (eg. FSC certified).
- Find an eco-friendly printing house that provides both eco-paper and eco-inks.
- Limit the number of pens that are in the office – say thank you to merchandise if you think you have enough; try to limit the number of single-use pens and replace them with those that you can refill.
- Have a “Zero Plastic Week” to challenge your office’s habits.
- If possible, recycle and upcycle as much as you can, waste segregation goes without saying.

Kitchen

If your office is fitted with a kitchen, you might want to look at the issues concerning its management useful:

- Encourage visitors to bring their own cups to use and reuse.
- Organize a food sharing community – each day one person can provide a lunch, in this way you limit food waste and use less energy
- Drink tap water if it is possible in your area. If not, perhaps install a water dispenser so the amount of bottles used can be limited.

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- Try to use fair-trade products in your office.
- Consider buying fruits that that perhaps do not look best in your local grocery. If you do not buy them, probably they will end up at a landfill.
- Encourage buying local products.

Management

Have you ever thought of starting a meeting with a question “What can we do to make this meeting more sustainable?” This warm-up can be very useful. If your office is in a building where there are more organizations/firms, try to encourage sharing kitchenware, newspapers, but also influence other people’s behaviour to make them greener.

Some organisations deal with substantial funds coming from grants, properties owned, etc. You probably use a bank to transfer money or receive donations. Therefore you should think about ethical financing. This means that the money that is paid in on your account does not support activities and does not contribute to human exploitation or doubtful ways of making profit. Take a moment to learn about your bank’s corporate social responsibility code of conduct, activities they engage in or foundations they support.

Transport

The transportation sector in general is considered as one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gases emissions. Moreover, since the majority of the EYCE’s members are nation-wide or even international organisations, travels of individual employees, volunteers or others involved are, in many cases, common and necessary part of an organisation’s activity. Therefore, lowering our ecological footprint related to travelling is essential for finding a sustainable way of living. This could be achieved either by lowering the need to travel, by choosing a more eco-friendly way of travelling or by compensating the harmful effect we do. Several concrete tips how to do this follows.

Practical hints

- At first, evaluate all the travels which are related to your activities. Include not only travels of your workers (employees and volunteers) but also travels of participants and guests of a meeting or an activity you organize. Is it really necessary to travel in all cases? Consider organizing an **online meeting** (via Skype or other providers), **webinar** etc.
- If travelling is necessary, reconsider your travelling and reimbursement policies in favour of more eco-friendly means of transportation.

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- Avoid Flying. If flying is necessary, avoid extra miles and extra stops. Always the cheapest option doesn't need to be the most ecological one.
- Increase the share of trains primarily and buses secondarily (and ships/ferries if applicable) on the overall travels you do/support.
- In case you have to take a car, support car sharing and car pooling (e.g. www.carpooling.com and other services)
- Support use of bicycles and public transport in towns/cities. Support your employees to use bikes – provide them with a suitable facilities needed for that. Get an office bike for travel within the city.
- Lobby for higher regulations of greenhouses gases emission on global as well as on national level.
- Lobby for higher support to public transport and bikes in your city.
- Compensate for harmful effects you did by planting trees or financially support tree plantation.

More practical resources to all the content areas could be found at www.eyce.org/campaign/be-eco-heroes. You are welcome to contribute to enlarging links available by contacting the Campaign Coordination Team with a recommendation to a document at campaign@eyce.org.

Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe

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