

GUIDEBOOK

WE TURN ON ZERO WASTE AND LESS WASTE IN EVERYDAY LIFE



Guidebook for young people

Brochure prepared by:

Društvo Ekologi Brez Meja (SLOVENIA)

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Stowarzyszenie Centrum Rozwoju (LEADER-POLAND)
Edukacji Obywatelskiej CREO
ul. Kochanowskiego 8A/2
60-845 Poznań
www.centrumcreo.pl



Stowarzyszenie Metropolia Poznań (POLAND)
ul. Kościelna 37
60-537 Poznań
www.metropoliapoznan.pl
www.konsultacje.metropoliapoznan.pl/eko



Norsensus Mediaforum (NORWAY)
Rådhusgata 20
0151 Oslo
www.norsensus.no



Društvo Ekologi Brez Meja (SLOVENIA)
Trubarjeva 50
1000 Ljubljana
www.ebm.si



Welcome to the Zero waste guidebook!

In this guide we will explore the importance of zero waste, how to incorporate zero waste practices into everyday life and ways to increase your involvement in civic and social activities related to environmental issues. Together, we can empower young people like you to create positive change and build a sustainable future together.

Let's begin.

**Understanding
zero waste**

**Becoming zero
waste**

**Zero waste
practices
in everyday life**

**Raising
awareness**

**Youth
participation**

**Involvement
in local policies**

1. Understanding zero waste

Zero waste is a philosophy and a lifestyle that aims to minimize waste generation and maximize resource efficiency. It involves rethinking our consumption patterns, reusing materials, recycling effectively and ultimately sending nothing to landfill or incineration. By adopting the zero waste approach, we can reduce our environmental impact, conserve natural resources and protect ecosystems.

Waste generation is a significant environmental challenge that contributes to pollution, climate change and the depletion of natural resources. Zero waste minimizes the extraction of raw materials, reduces energy consumption and prevents the release of greenhouse gasses and toxic substances into the environment. It promotes circular economy principles where resources are used efficiently and continuously reused, repaired and recycled, thus reducing the need for extraction and production of new materials. By embracing zero waste practices we can foster not only a more sustainable, but an equitable society as well. Zero waste in its core principle promotes social responsibility, encourages mindful consumption and supports local economies by prioritizing reusable and locally sourced products. It's the driving force for community engagement and collaboration, as individuals, businesses and governments work together to achieve common sustainability goals.

In the following sections we will delve into practical ways to incorporate zero waste practices into everyday life, engage with your community and actively participate in local policies and initiatives. Let's embark on this journey towards a sustainable, zero waste future together!

2. Becoming zero waste

To become zero waste, it is crucial to first understand your personal environmental impact.

- ❖ Assess your daily habits and consumption patterns
- ❖ Consider the resources you use
- ❖ Examine the waste you generate
- ❖ Calculate the carbon footprint associated with your lifestyle

This self-reflection will help you identify areas where you can make positive changes and reduce your impact on the environment.



Adopting a zero waste lifestyle

Like any long term change, it all starts with a new mindset. That involves reevaluating your relationship with material possessions and embracing a more sustainable approach to consumption. It means prioritizing quality over quantity, avoiding unnecessary purchases and opting for reusable and durable

products. By focusing on what you truly need, you can reduce waste, conserve resources and save some money!

3. Incorporating zero waste practices into everyday life

Living a true zero waste lifestyle is all about reducing. Because we live in a consumption based economy, we are constantly bombarded from all sides and it's sometimes very hard to resist buying stuff we don't actually need. So your new, most important question before making a purchase should become: **Do I truly need this?**

For things you actually do need, try to follow these basic principles:

1. Make it a habit to **carry reusable items with you** at all times. Keep a reusable water bottle, coffee cup and a shopping bag in your backpack, so you're always prepared to avoid single use-alternatives.



2. **Opt for loose produce** instead of pre-packed options, buy in bulk or choose products with minimal packaging.
3. Before discarding items **consider repairing** them.



Learn basic repair skills or find a local repair cafe to extend the lifespan of your belongings. Additionally, repurpose items creatively instead of throwing them away.

4. To **avoid food waste**, make a shopping list before going to the grocery store, follow recipes to get a feel of the measurements, learn how to correctly store food and get creative with food scraps and leftovers. For example; you can make gnocchi out of mashed potatoes or use peels to make chips.
5. If you don't have a **composting** bin, start one in your backyard or explore composting programs in your community. Composting allows organic waste like food scraps to turn into nutrient-rich soil instead of ending up in landfills where it releases huge amounts of potent methane gas.
6. When buying clothes, always opt for quality, plastic free fabrics. Consider buying them in **second hand** shops or find local swap events. Before throwing them away, try to repair or repurpose them into something new.
7. Instead of throwing away usable items, **consider donating** them to local charities, reuse centers, thrift stores or friends who may have a use for them. Sharing resources helps reduce waste and supports the community.
8. Choose **personal care products** with minimal packaging like solid shampoos and avoid single-use items like cotton pads or disposable razors. Instead look for sustainable alternatives like reusable cloth pads and safety razors.



9. Make your own cleaning products using natural ingredients like vinegar, baking soda and essential oils. This reduces the need for plastic packaging and minimizes exposure to harmful chemicals.



10. Familiarize yourself with your local **recycling guidelines** to ensure you're recycling correctly. Empty containers, remove caps and sort recyclables according to the guidelines provided by your municipality.

Remember, transitioning to a zero waste lifestyle is a process that takes time and effort. Start by implementing small changes and gradually build on them as you become more comfortable. Every step you take toward reducing waste contributes to a more sustainable future and inspires others to do the same.

4. Raising awareness

Living a zero waste lifestyle surely has a positive impact not only on the planet but everyone around you. Setting an example is usually more convincing than preaching, but that doesn't mean that teaching others what you yourself have learned isn't going to reap its rewards.

There is power in numbers. Don't be shy to share your knowledge and experiences with friends, family and peers. Start conversations about the environmental impact of waste and the benefits of adopting zero waste

practices. By using social media, blogs or public speaking opportunities you can amplify your message and reach a wider audience.

Engaging with local communities

Local communities were always a great catalyst for change, so it is wise to start actively engaging in their activities. Join neighborhood associations, initiatives focused on sustainability or any other kind of local organization. By participating in community events and discussions related to waste management and environmental conservation you can get your foot in the door and share your insights. Always try to ask a lot of questions first and find out what the biggest pain points are, so you can propose solutions that make sense for your local community and will consequently get supported.

Maybe your neighborhood doesn't have a store where you can buy food without packaging, maybe it's missing a water fountain or doesn't have its own composting program. Small incremental changes on a community level are the ones making a difference.

Being an active member of your community sometimes means getting your hands dirty. Consider volunteering in or proposing local cleanup activities or some other type of environmental restoration project. This hands-on involvement allows you to directly contribute to creating a cleaner and healthier environment in your neighborhood and it also provides opportunities to engage with diverse community members, share knowledge and inspire them to adopt zero waste practices. You can even take it a step further by collaborating with local schools or community centers and organize events,

workshops or presentations about the many aspects of zero waste. Find your local experts and invite guest speakers to share their insights. Think about how to creatively share your message, to make it engaging and memorable- it could be an art installation or even a competition. Try imagining what you would respond to.



5. Increasing youth participation

If your local community is not the place for you, maybe joining an environmental organization or youth-led club just might do the trick. That is an excellent way to connect with like-minded individuals and contribute to impactful initiatives. Research local and national environmental organizations that align with your interests so you can participate in their activities, campaigns, and projects. By working together with others who share your passion for sustainability, you can amplify your impact and create lasting change.

In a group of young environmentally conscious people, you are destined to find a few who would want to walk a zero waste journey with you. There is nothing better than having support from your fellow colleagues and doing things

together. Not only will you create bonds that will last a lifetime, you can really make a difference!

And there are no real limits as to what you can do.

1. **Organize lectures**, panel discussions or movie nights to raise awareness.
2. **Host zero waste workshops** where you can teach people how to make their own eco-friendly cleaning products, host clothes swaps or demonstrate different composting techniques. The sky's the limit. These interactive experiences provide valuable insights and empower others to adopt zero waste practices in their own lives.
3. **Fight for infrastructure.** Think about how you can bring a repair cafe to life, open a reuse center or a second hand store in your community.
4. **Engage with different institutions** to promote zero waste practices among staff members. Collaborate with everyone involved to introduce sustainability initiatives and integrate them into their everyday life at work.

Example: You can fight to ban plastic cups or vending machines that sell water in your school and opt for a fountain instead.

5. Get involved in **local policies**- more on that down below.

By actively participating in social and civic activities, you can create a ripple effect of change, inspire others to get involved, and drive collective action toward a more sustainable future.



Empowering the next generation

Empowering the next generation is crucial for creating a lasting impact. Share your knowledge and experiences with peers, friends and younger generations. Try to inspire them to embrace zero waste practices and engage in environmental initiatives. Be a role model by living your values and showcasing the positive outcomes of sustainable choices.

Consider connecting with like-minded individuals globally — there are existing networks of youth activists dedicated to zero waste. Utilize social media platforms, online forums or youth-led organizations to collaborate, share ideas and work collectively towards common goals. By building this global network, you can expand your impact and leverage the power of collective action.



And don't forget to celebrate your achievements, no matter how small! It is essential for maintaining motivation and inspiring others. Recognize and share success stories of individuals or groups who have made significant progress in their zero waste journey. By highlighting their achievements, you will create a supportive and encouraging environment that will foster further engagement.

Empowering the next generation involves nurturing a sense of responsibility and ownership over environmental issues. By inspiring others, recognizing achievements and fostering connections, you can cultivate a strong and resilient movement of youth activists committed to creating a sustainable future.

6. Involvement in local policies

Sooner or later you will realize that systems in place don't follow the same principles as you now do, so something bigger has to change. Not to overwhelm yourself with saving the world, always try to first and foremost think about what you can do in your local environment.

Local governments play a crucial role in creating and implementing policies related to waste management and environmental conservation. Understanding their role and responsibilities is essential for effectively advocating for change. First research your local government's structure, departments and policies related to waste management, recycling and sustainability, so you know who you are addressing.



Become familiar with existing local policies and initiatives related to circular economy and zero waste. Analyze their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for

improvement. Identify gaps or opportunities where your input and engagement can make a difference and stay informed about upcoming meetings, public consultations, or community forums related to waste management and environmental issues so you can make your move, when the time is right.

Building partnerships with local officials

Building relationships with local officials is key to influencing policy decisions. Reach out to local council members, waste management departments or sustainability officers. Attend council meetings, public hearings or town halls where waste-related policies are discussed. Share your perspectives, experiences and suggestions for more effective waste management practices and zero waste policies. By establishing connections and presenting well-informed arguments, you can influence decision-makers and encourage them to prioritize environmental concerns.

Advocacy and lobbying for change

Advocacy and lobbying are powerful tools for influencing policy and driving change. Why do you think the oil industry still has so much power over the decisions made today? Mobilize your community, organize petitions and engage in letter-writing campaigns to express your support for zero waste practices. Collaborate with other environmental organizations and community groups to amplify your voice and advocate collectively for stronger zero waste policies. Don't forget to utilize social media platforms and traditional media outlets to raise awareness and rally public support for your cause.

But don't just rush into it. It is important to approach advocacy and lobbying strategically. Identifying key decision-makers, building relationships with them

and communicating your ideas effectively is not the easiest of tasks. You have to prepare well-researched and fact-based arguments to support your position and it is always best to collaborate together with other stakeholders to propose viable alternatives and solutions.

Remember, change takes time and persistence. Stay engaged, stay informed and continue to advocate for circular economy practices. Your active involvement can lead to impactful changes in your local community.

Conclusion

Congratulations on completing the Zero Waste Guidebook! Throughout this journey we have explored the importance of zero waste, learned practical ways to incorporate zero waste practices into everyday life and discovered how to increase your civic and social participation in environmental initiatives. We even dove into strategies to increase your involvement in local policies. By embracing a zero waste mindset, reducing single-use items, practicing sustainable shopping habits and efficiently managing waste, you have taken significant steps toward living a more sustainable and environmentally conscious life. Your actions not only benefit the planet but also inspire others to do the same.

Engaging with your local community, spreading awareness and encouraging civic involvement will allow you to have a broader impact. By joining environmental organizations, volunteering for sustainable initiatives and collaborating with others, you can amplify your efforts and drive positive change at a larger scale.

Furthermore, by actively participating in local policies, advocating for change and building partnerships with local officials, you can influence decision-making processes and help shape more sustainable policies in your community.

Remember that **your voice and actions matter**, and by engaging in the political process, you contribute to creating a greener and more sustainable future.

Lastly, empowering the next generation is crucial for ensuring the long-term success of environmental initiatives. By inspiring others, recognizing achievements and building a global network of youth activists, you can create a strong and resilient movement dedicated to addressing zero waste.

As you continue your zero waste journey, remember that progress is incremental and change takes time. Celebrate your achievements, no matter how small and continue to educate yourself, inspire others and advocate for a more sustainable world. Together, we can create a future where zero waste is the norm and our planet thrives for generations to come.

Thank you for your dedication to making a difference and best of luck on your zero waste journey!



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