

# **LIFELONG-LIFEWIDE LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE REGENERATIVE FUTURES**

**An Open, Experiential & Experimental Inquiry**

**Facilitated by Lifeworld Education**

**October 18 to November 22, 2021**

## **Background**

The 'Lifeworld Learning Research and Development Group' is a network of people interested in the idea of lifeworld learning and education. The group is using a naturalistic, experiential inquiry methodology to explore, apply and develop the concept of lifeworld learning to their own lives and circumstances. In Feb/March 2021 the group conducted a 6 week experiential collaborative inquiry exploring their own lifeworld learning. Participants undertook to pay more attention to their learning in the different domains of experience in their life, and to describe their experiences and insights of learning in a series of vignettes. The collection of 152 vignettes of personal experiences in which learning emerged provided a substantial database through which to develop better understandings of adult lifeworld learning. Some of the learning from the Learning Lives inquiry has been curated and disseminated through Lifeworld Magazine #24 (Jackson, Willis and Ward 2021). The project demonstrated the power and effectiveness of our social ecology for inquiry into our own experiences in which learning was involved.

In January 2021 Lifeworld Education joined the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning Futures of Education initiative. Our second experiential inquiry, planned for October 18 – November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, is a contribution to this initiative. We will use a similar approach to explore lifeworld learning in the context of personal actions and experiments that are aimed at creating more sustainable futures, drawing inspiration for the UN Goals for Sustainable Development (UN 2015). These goals, and derivatives like the Good Life Goals (2018), provide a comprehensive framework to stimulate thinking and actions that are consistent with reducing human impacts on the world that are detrimental to future sustainability and enhancing impacts that are more likely to secure a sustainable future. This background paper provides a rationale, conceptual framework and outline methodology for the inquiry.

## **The Most Wicked Problem of All**

Sustaining anything as complex as the world and all its ecosystems and inhabitants is the most complex and profound of all 'wicked problems' (Rittel and Weber 1973). In fact, sustaining the Earth and all the systems of life it supports is a constellation of wicked problems. Left to its own devices and given sufficient time, the Earth will adapt and regenerate regardless of the stresses and forces it is subject to. It might take millions of years but that is the time scale of planetary renewal.

**Figure 1** Characteristics of a wicked problem (Rittel and Webber 1973)



Many decades of scientific research have shown that human behaviours have not only reshaped our world to make it more habitable for more humans, but in doing so have had a serious detrimental impact on planetary resources and systems that sustain all forms of life. It is only a matter of time before we cause irreversible damage.

*“Our current global footprint is about one and half times the Earth’s total capacity to provide renewable and non-renewable resources to humanity. In 35 years, with an increasing population that could reach 9.6 billion by 2050, and if our consumption needs and production patterns remain the same, we will need almost 3 planets to sustain our ways of living. Impacts from climate change continue and intensify, biodiversity loss is still accelerating, and non-renewable resources are increasingly exploited, bringing us closer to breaching more planetary boundaries.” (UNESCO 2018)*

In the last few decades we have reached the point where the UN, the world’s strategic planner and policy shaper, and national Governments, have begun the process of engaging with this challenge which requires nothing more than societal transformation and the mobilisation of the human race. As Luksha et al point out, education and learning are at the heart of this transformational project but our approaches to education and lifelong learning will also need to be transformed if we are to succeed.

*We are living in a time of accelerated, global, complex change, in which our human society faces increasing pressure to evolve our systems and processes to meet the demands of the 21st century and beyond. Education is the most sophisticated social technology for societal transformation and intentional evolution — yet it is still a widely underutilized pathway for co-creating and contributing toward sustainable, regenerative, and thriving futures within and beyond our biosphere.....Yet our educational systems are still designed for the world of yesterday — and so they must be changed to meet the demands of the future, including increasing social, ecological, and economic complexity in all domains of human life. It is necessary to re-imagine the purpose and the design of education in the here and now; what is needed is nothing less than a renaissance of both human values and vision in action transforming human learning and leadership learn together in a way that cultivates our collective potential, we diminish prospects of the continuation of the human experiment on Earth (Extracts from ‘Educational Ecosystems for Societal Transformation’ Luksha et al 2017 p 2).*

### The lesson of Covid 19

The global pandemic disrupted the global economy and the daily lives of billions of people and shocked the world into entirely new habits and ways of living. In doing so it has shown us that we can collaborate at a global scale, mobilise necessary resources and adapt profoundly and quickly to emergent threats. It has shown us that across countries and cultures we can develop and adopt new attitudes, behaviours, practices and ways of being that are essential for survival in the covid ridden world now and in the future.

### United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The wicked problem of our future survival is framed by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, (UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1) which offers 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The political, educational and social challenge is to encourage, educate, guide and nurture at a global scale, a multitude of educational systems, cultures and societies to practically embrace the co-created vision of lifelong learning for all within a context where learning through and across life contributes positively to the UNs 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

**Figure 2** UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s)

**17 SDG’s:** (1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well-being, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, (10) Reducing Inequality, (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action, (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life On Land, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnerships for the Goals.



## Learning For Sustainable Regenerative Futures

Complex problems require vision to see beyond the problem. The first report of UNESCO'S Institute for Lifelong Learning, Future of Education initiative (UNESCO 2020) presents a future-focused vision that demands a major shift towards a culture of lifelong learning by 2050. It argues that the unprecedented challenges humanity faces, require societies to embrace and support learning throughout life and people who identify themselves as learners throughout their lives (UNESCO 2020a p. 12-13).

*This 2050 vision is of a world that has undergone a deep cultural shift based on a strong awareness of the innate potential of learning. Societies self-consciously strive to be learning societies and people identify as lifelong learners. With a continuous learning ethos pervading all spheres of life.*

*[Lifelong] learning [is] for oneself, for others and for the planet, it also has a key role in driving sustainability. Lifelong learning is about the sustained and sustainable freedom of individuals, linking social freedom to environmental responsibility. At an individual level, lifelong learning now contributes to a greater awareness of all the dimensions of sustainability. Individuals are empowered by lifelong learning to change behavioural patterns, (ibid p14).*

The recognition that learning and education for sustainable development is a whole of life commitment and practice means that any policy that is focused only on formal education will not achieve the 2050 vision. What is required is:

- an expanded vision of learning and action as a lifewide (every part of life at any point in time) lifelong (every point in time along the journey of life),
- and a culture that values learning in every aspect of life, and values learning as the pathway to creating better versions of ourselves and a better (more sustainable) world.

This vision and culture that reaches beyond the SDG#4 goal of *promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all*, to the idea that *“the whole of life is learning therefore education can have no ending”* first proposed by Charles Lindeman nearly a century ago. Without learning we cannot *sustain our futures* - a deliberately ambiguous phrase to cover the multitude of futures that are possible for ourselves, our offspring and generations to come, our societies and future societies and the planet that sustains and nourishes all life. Furthermore, it is only through learning that we develop beliefs, values and attitudes that lead us to care about others and the world and not just ourselves.

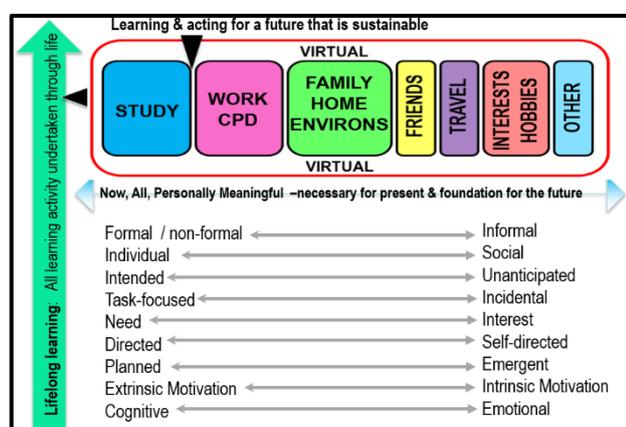
## Importance of Lifewide Learning for Sustainable Futures

Lifewide learning adds the detail and purpose to the lifelong pattern of human development by recognising that most people, no matter what their age or circumstances, simultaneously inhabit a number of different spaces - like work or education, being a member of a family, being involved in clubs or societies, caring for others, participating in their local community, engaging in sport and other activities to keep fit, travelling, and looking after their own wellbeing mentally, physically and spiritually (Figure 3).

**Figure 3** A conceptual framework for lifewide learning (Jackson 2011)

The concept of lifewide learning provides the most comprehensive and inclusive framework within which we can understand learning, personal development and action. Because of this lifewide learning provides the foundation for a better understanding of the nature of lifelong learning.

Figure 3 illustrates some of the spaces that typify our lives. Each spaces is characterised by its own rhythms and time frames, places and environments, people, activities and experiences. In these different parts of our life we think and interact with different people, have different sorts of relationships, adopt different roles and identities, experience the full range of human emotions including failure as well as



success. In these different spaces we encounter different sorts of challenges and problems, seize, create or miss opportunities. We aspire to achieve our ambitions, learn to love and ultimately experience our own demise.

It is in the lifewide dimension of our life where our positive and negative impacts on the world are manifest – for example when we travel, when we water our garden or burn garden waste, when we go shopping or engage in a building project. And it is in this dimension of our life where we can learn to change our behaviours in ways that minimise and/or mediate the damage we can cause to the world. This is why the focus for our inquiry is on the lifewide dimension of our life.

### Experiential, Experimental Inquiry

We all have a role to play in sustaining our own future and the futures of the people we care about. And beyond this we have a moral and ethical responsibility to help create the best conditions for future generations. This ecological project connects humanity in a profound way to the planet that is responsible for our very existence.

Lifewide Education is responding to the UN’s 2030 call for ‘learning for a more sustainable world’ by facilitating an experiential, experimental inquiry into the way lifewide learning and education might contribute to a paradigm of learning and action that embraces consciously and fully the lifewide dimensions of everyday life and its fundamentally ecological and formational character. Learning for a sustainable future means learning through doing things that will realise that future and reducing the things we do that diminish that future.

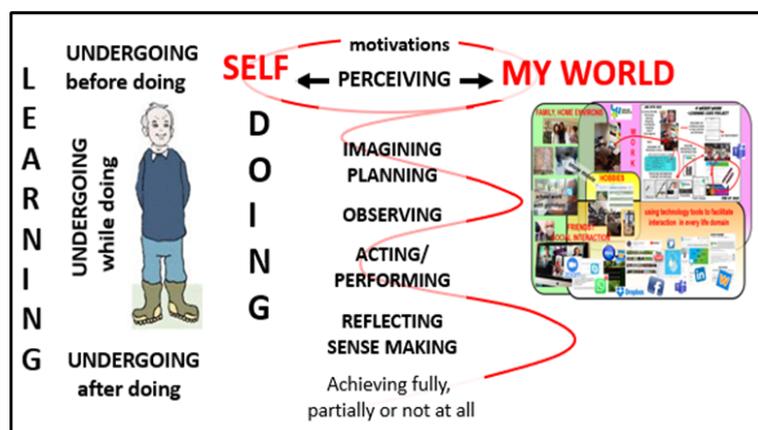
Learning through the experience of doing and experiencing the effects of our doings connects us to educational theorist John Dewey. For Dewey doing and the experience that emerges is always a dynamic two-way process. He referred to this process as a ‘transaction’: ‘An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between the individual and, what at the time, constitutes the environment’ (Dewey 1938: 43).

*“When we experience something we act upon it, we do something; then we suffer or undergo the consequences. We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return: such is the peculiar combination. The connection of these two phases of experience measures the fruitfulness of experience. Mere activity does not constitute experience.”* (Dewey 1916: 104).

Dewey elaborates on this two-way process, suggesting that experience involves both ‘trying’ and ‘undergoing’ (Dewey 1916: 104). ‘Trying’ refers to the outward expression of intention or action. It is the purposeful engagement of the individual with their environment or in Dewey’s words, *“doing becomes trying; an experiment with the world to find out what it is like”* (ibid). Through action an attempt is made to have an impact on the world. ‘Undergoing’, the other aspect of the ‘transaction’ in experience, refers to the consequences of experience on the individual. In turn, in attempting to have an impact, the experience also impacts on us. ‘Undergoing’ refers to the consequences of the experience for us (Ord 2012 p60).

A visual representation of John Dewey’s transactional / interactional model of human experience is shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4** Visual representation of Dewey’s interactional model of experience in which the individual perceives and interacts with their everyday world. Learning, creativity and other achievements emerge through this interactive process.



The important point to make here is that this is the contextual and situational framework within which we live our lives everyday consequently it is the world we can affect through our behaviours and doings and it is these personal worlds in which they idea of sustainability takes on personal and concrete meaning

The transactional of experience involving people interacting with, using resources and impacting on and modifying their environments, provides the foundation for the ecological perspective on people inhabiting and participating in a world in formation that they are enabling to form (Barnet and Jackson 2020). Like all other forms of life we are related and connected to our world in a profoundly ecological way – we dwell in complex ecosystems that we have helped to create and it is our effects in and on these ecosystems through the ecologies we create as we engage in and with the things that matter to us, that determine their health and sustainability. Our inquiry is an exercise in encouraging participants to think ecologically, to see themselves as active participants in a world in formation in which they themselves are enabling this formation and what they do has an impact on what is formed.

### Our Ecology for Social Learning

The strength of our approach lies in bringing together people from across the world in a culture of participation and mutual respect to share their experiences and understandings in order to learn together.

People who join our social ecology for experimentation and learning will be expected to commit to a 5 week process during which they will learn about and make sense of the Sustainable Development Goals and examine their lives for ways in which they might experiment, changing thinking, behaviours and practices in ways that are more likely to achieve their choice of SD goals. An outline of the process is given below.



## **Inquiry Process (5 weeks)**

**INTRODUCTORY ZOOM MEETING MONDAY OCTOBER 18<sup>TH</sup> 11.00-12.00BST**

### **WEEK 1 OCTOBER 18th**

#### **1 Prepare a personal audit of how you are achieving the SDG's in your own life**

The first stage of the inquiry is to familiarise yourself with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and perhaps other examples of goals that have been produced to support more sustainable futures. Table 1 summarises the 17 SDG's and the derivative Good Life Goals.

Using the Personal SDG Framework provided in Table 1 reflect on your life, habits and behaviours and what the SDG's mean to you in your circumstances and contexts. Create your own personal goals for a more sustainable future and identify ways in which you could achieve these goals if you are not already achieving them. The framework provides a personal map that can be developed throughout the inquiry.

### **WEEKs 2 – 4 (October 25 to Nov 14)**

#### **2 Experiment, Narrate & Reflect**

The SDGs are a call to action but for them to work at the level of the individual an aspect of the goal must evoke an emotional response that motivates us to act. In other words the SDG must provoke, interest, inspire, scare, challenge or in some other way stimulate us to act in a different way to what we have done in the past. Without this emotional reaction it is unlikely that changes to behaviours will be sustained.

Each week you are encouraged to **choose an SDG** that provokes, interests, inspires, scares, makes you feel guilty or challenges you in some other way, and then **try to implement the goal in any part of your life in a way that is meaningful to you.**

At the end of each week **we would like you to create a story or vignette** (Word Document), describing

- what you tried to do
- why you tried to do it (why is this important to you)
- what happened – what did you learn and how will this enable you to behave differently in future

**Please share your vignette with other participants by posting it in the Lifewide Research and Development Group Forum on LinkedIn.** This is our space for the sharing of experiences and for collaborative social learning and we encourage participants to comment in a respectful and appreciative way on each others posts and vignettes.

Appendix 1 contains several examples of Vignettes produced by members of the facilitation team.

### **WEEK 5 (Nov 15 - 22)**

#### **3 Synthesise, consolidate and share your learning**

In the final week of the inquiry we would like you to synthesize and consolidate what you have learnt about trying to live a life that adopts the spirit of living for a more sustainable future.

Your synthesis will include:

- 1 Your completed Personal SDG Framework
- 2 Your three vignettes
- 3 A short reflective account describing what you have learnt.

We are particularly interested in the way you experienced your own transformational process.

**CLOSURE ZOOM MEETING MONDAY NOV 22 11.00-12.15GMT**

**Table 1** Framework for Personalising and Implementing UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals

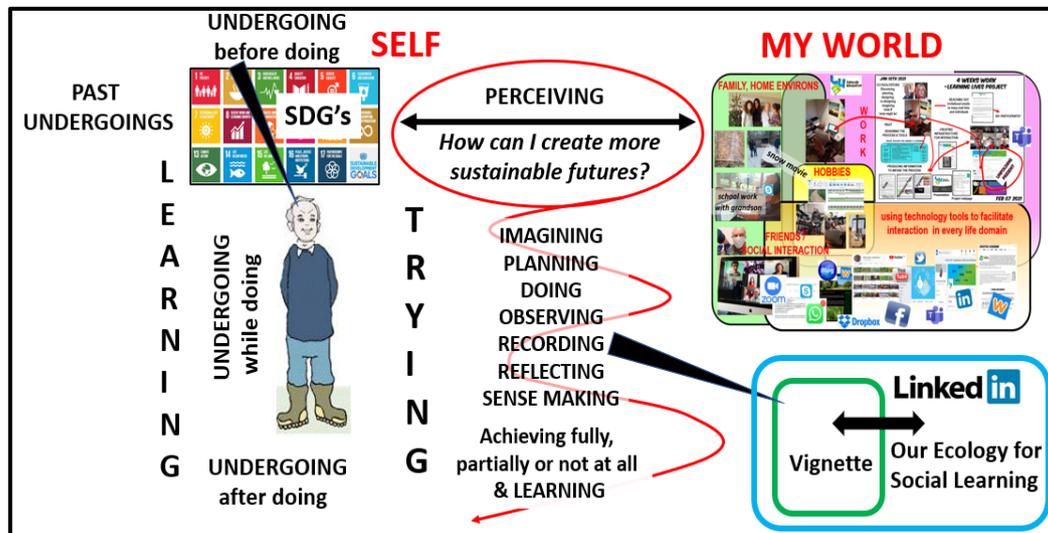
<b>1 UN Sustainable Development Goals</b>	<b>2 Good Life Goals</b>	<b>3 My Sustainable Future Goals</b>	<b>4 Current &amp; Future Lifewide Opportunities &amp; Actions</b>	<b>5 Environments for Action &amp; Vignettes eg home, work other</b>
(1) No Poverty	1 Help End Poverty			
(2) Zero Hunger	2. Eat Better			
(3) Good Health and Well-being	3. Stay Well			
4) Quality Education	4. Learn and Teach			
(5) Gender Equality	5. Treat Everyone Equal			
(6) Clean Water and Sanitation	6. Save Water			
(7) Affordable and Clean Energy	7. Use Clean Energy			
(8) Decent Work and Economic Growth	8. Do Good Work			
(9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	9. Make Smart Choices			
(10) Reducing Inequality	10. Be Fair			
(11) Sustainable Cities and Communities	11. Love Where You Live			
(12) Responsible Consumption and Production	12. Live Better			
(13) Climate Action	13. Act on Climate			
(14) Life Below Water	14. Clean the Seas			
(15) Life On Land	15. Love Nature			
(16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	16. Make Peace			
(17) Partnerships for the Goals.	17. Come Together – get involved			

**NOTE:** There are many websites offering advice on eco-friendly goals that will contribute to a healthy lifestyle and a healthier planet. Such goals can be incorporated into this template and adopted as personal goals.

## Sharing Our Learning with the Wider World

The results of the inquiry will be curated in the December issue of Lifewide Magazine to share what we have learnt with the wider world.

### Representation of the process underlying the Lifewide Learning for Sustainable Futures Inquiry



## Invitation

We invite you to join our social ecology for the purpose of exploring and revealing how, we as individuals, might use our lifewide learning to change our thinking, behaviours and practices in order to live more sustainable lives and contribute to a more sustainable world. We want to reach out to people all over the world to reflect the diversity of our planet and cultures.

Our 'Lifewide Learning for Sustainable Futures Inquiry' will take place between **October 18 – November 22** 2021 in our dedicated space for inquiry on the Linked In platform. To participate you will need a Linked In account and you will be invited to join the inquiry space via Linked In. Further information about the inquiry will be posted on our sustainable futures project webpage <https://www.lifewideeducation.uk/sustainable-futures.html>

If you would like to participate, please contact me Professor Norman Jackson [lifewider@gmail.com](mailto:lifewider@gmail.com)

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# APPENDIX

## UN 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

(1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well-being, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, (10) Reducing Inequality, (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action, (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life On Land, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnerships for the Goals.

To find out more about the goals visit: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

## GOOD LIFE GOALS WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF ACTIONS

To find out more about the goals visit: <https://www.goodlifegoals.org/>

When the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in the UN General Assembly in 2015, it was meant as a guide for concerted action by humanity. Their purpose is to focus attention and inspire action by governments and businesses. At a personal level these goals are not easy to action so the UN commissioned the development of the Good Life Goals to inspire and enable individuals to participate in the conversation and act on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their everyday lives in ways that were personally meaningful. The Good Life Goals lay out **85 ways (5 for each of the 17 SDGs) in which anyone can contribute** towards the huge, planet-changing objectives that sit at the heart of the SDG agenda. There are of course a multitude of ways in which the SDG's can be interpreted and actioned so these are just a set of prompts to get people to think about sustainability in their own lives and circumstances.

The Good Life Goals have been shaped through a multi-stakeholder collaboration between Futerra, the 10 YFP Sustainable Lifestyles and Education program, co-led by the governments of Sweden and Japan represented by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), as well as UN Environment, UNESCO and WBCSD (World Business Council for Sustainable Development)

### 1 Help End Poverty

- Learn the causes of poverty at home and abroad
- Share and donate what you can
- Buy from companies that pay people fairly
- Save, borrow and invest responsibly
- Demand decent wages and opportunities for all

### 2. Eat Better

- Learn how we farm, fish and make our food
- Enjoy more fruits and vegetables
- Buy local, seasonal and fairly traded food
- Help children, elderly people and pregnant women to eat well
- Demand an end to global hunger

### 3. Stay Well

- Learn about, and share, ways to stay healthy
- Wash your hands and exercise regularly
- Stay safe on or near roads
- Value mental health and well-being
- Demand medical care and vaccinations for all

#### **4. Learn and Teach**

- Keep learning throughout life
- Teach kids kindness
- Help girls and boys stay in school
- Support teachers and keep schools open
- Defend everyone's right to an education

#### **5. Treat Everyone Equal**

- Learn and share ways to end sexism
- Raise kids to expect equality
- Respect the men and women who care for families
- Defend women's reproductive rights
- Oppose violence against women and girls

#### **6. Save Water**

- Learn why clean water matters
- Don't flush any trash or toxic chemicals
- Report and fix leaks – big or small
- Save water when brushing your teeth, washing and cleaning
- Defend people's right to clean water and a toilet

#### **7. Use Clean Energy**

- Find out where your energy comes from
- Save energy wherever you can
- Use renewable energy for heat, light and power
- Buy from companies powered by renewable energy
- Demand clean, affordable energy for everyone

#### **8. Do Good Work**

- Learn family finance skills
- Demand safe working conditions
- Check no-one was exploited to make what you buy
- Support local businesses at home and abroad
- Stand up for everyone's rights at work

#### **9. Make Smart Choices**

- Learn about plans for progress in your country
- Stay smart and kind online
- Support construction that benefits people and protects the planet
- Welcome innovations that make the world a better place
- Demand the benefits from progress are shared

#### **10. Be Fair**

- Stay open-minded, listen and learn from others
- Support leaders who reduce inequality
- Protect and welcome the vulnerable
- Buy from companies that pay tax and treat people fairly
- Stand up for your rights, and the rights of others

#### **11. Love Where You Live**

- Learn about, and take part in, local decisions
- Prepare for emergencies
- Get to know your neighbours and welcome new people
- Protect local trees, wildlife and natural areas

- Demand safe and good quality public transport

#### **12. Live Better**

- Learn about sustainable development
- Reuse, repair, recycle, share and borrow
- Waste less food and use leftovers
- Collect friends and experiences, not just things
- Demand that businesses respect people and planet

#### **13. Act on Climate**

- Learn about climate solutions
- Call for more renewable energy in your country
- Eat more plants and cut down on meat
- Walk and cycle rather than drive
- Demand leaders take bold climate action today

#### **14. Clean the Seas**

- Learn about life in our seas and oceans
- Remember that litter ends up in the water
- Say no to unnecessary plastic
- Buy sustainable fish and seafood
- Demand leaders end ocean pollution

#### **15. Love Nature**

- Discover the wonders of the natural world
- Protect native plants and animals
- Never buy products made from endangered wildlife
- Support companies that protect and restore nature
- Speak up for threatened forests and natural places

#### **16. Make Peace**

- Learn about and use your rights
- Be kind and tolerant
- Resist corruption and abuse of power
- Support the institutions that support people
- Stand up for fairness and peace

#### **17. Come Together**

- Discover and share the Sustainable Development Goals
- Support those who bring us together
- Celebrate the progress we've already made
- Get involved and volunteer in your community
- Help make tomorrow better than today

## 12 Ways to Live More Sustainably

[https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/population\\_and\\_sustainability/sustainability/live\\_more\\_sustainably.html](https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/population_and_sustainability/sustainability/live_more_sustainably.html)

Every day we make choices in our lives that affect the environment, the climate and other species. From what we eat to how many children we decide to have, there's a lot we can do to "choose wild" and reduce our environmental footprint to leave more room for wild animals and plants.

1. Think twice before shopping.
2. Make sure your big purchases have big environmental benefits.
3. Go #PlasticFree.
4. Boycott products that endanger wildlife.
5. Pay attention to labels.
6. Be water wise.
7. Drive less, drive green.
8. Green your home.
9. Choose Wild Energy.
10. Take Extinction Off Your Plate.
11. Choose to have a smaller family.
12. Use your voice and your vote.