Factsheet & Talking Points
Consumerism / Overconsumption vs. A new System on the rise

Black Friday

https://www.citipostmail.co.uk/blog/black-friday-around-the-world-2017-infographic/

The problem: a broken model

The over-consumption of convenience products like fast-fashion, single use paper and plastics, gadgets or toys designed not to last and and industrially-produced food is pushing our planet to its limits. Just one look at our heating climate, our plastics polluted oceans or our destroyed forests tells you we have gone too far. Still, large corporations continue to put profits first, whilst they reduce the quality, repairability and versatility of their products. Through omnipresent advertising we are told, again and again, to buy more and more stuff we don't need. Companies won't change unless we show them people want something different. Together we have to build something that will make this old, outdated, wasteful model obsolete.

The solution: a global movement of makers

There is a growing movement of people re-evaluating what we want and need and how we value and treat our possessions, re-discovering or learning skills like cooking, mending, fixing electronics, upcycling, growing their own food or producing their own cosmetics or plastic-free products. More and more people are commonly sharing more things like clothes, bikes and even flats. Community spaces in cities and hundreds of online communities have formed around these practices of sharing, upcycling, DIY, making and repairing. It's time to bring them together!

MAKE SMTHNG aims to connect to and grow this movement to help establish a post-consumerist culture in which experiences, creativity, skills and knowledge count more than new possessions. We create small solutions that people can practice in their lives. We need to create a cultural sea change where we truly value our goods again and keep them for as long as we can. Where happiness is not built on what we own but who we are as human beings and how we engage with people and nature. Because behaviour change is difficult, this change needs to be easy, fun and accessible.

MAKE SMTHNG is about changing mindsets

We want to trigger a cultural change where people will change their everyday behaviour. Being resourceful and creative with what we have should become the new normal, a shift away from the consumption of ready made products towards a more active, skillful and creative way of living. In return we will benefit with greater happiness and satisfaction - it's been proven that

doing stuff with our hands, being mindful about our daily life and connecting with others heightens our well-being, as opposed to the short-lived buzz off buying something new.

Key concepts

Consumerism / Overconsumption: While consumption means buying and using goods to meet one's needs, consumerism is shopping because we seek to meet our emotional and social needs through shopping, and define and demonstrate our self-worth through the stuff we own. Overconsumption is when we take far more resources than we need and the planet can sustain. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consume

Shopping does not make us happy: A 2017 Greenpeace survey found that people in East Asia, Germany and Italy regularly buy more clothes than they need, often for social and emotional reasons. However, people report that the shopping buzz is short-lived and fades away on average after a day - See full survey PDF

Planned Obsolescence: Companies produce goods that have a short life cycle on purpose. This process is called planned obsolescence. According to Story of Stuff, only 1 % of products we buy are still used after 6 months. Producers make goods disposable rather than durable so that consumers must continue to repurchase the good, earning the producer a steady supply of customers, rather than a one-time purchase. Profit is maximized for the firm when the usefulness of a good is "uneconomically short", because firms can spend the least amount possible creating a nondurable good, which they sell repeatedly to the customer.[13]

Single-Use and Throw-Away-Culture: Today, many products are used once and then thrown away forever.This started in the 1950s when the plastics and chemical industries sold the American public on the convenience of single-use disposable items. The throw-away principle now applies for many cheap goods we use everyday: from disposable cutlery, plastic packaging, paper towels and beauty products, via fast fashion that is worn only a couple of times, to gadgets that are cheaper to replace than repair, to cheap furniture that does not survive us moving homes.

Positive concepts

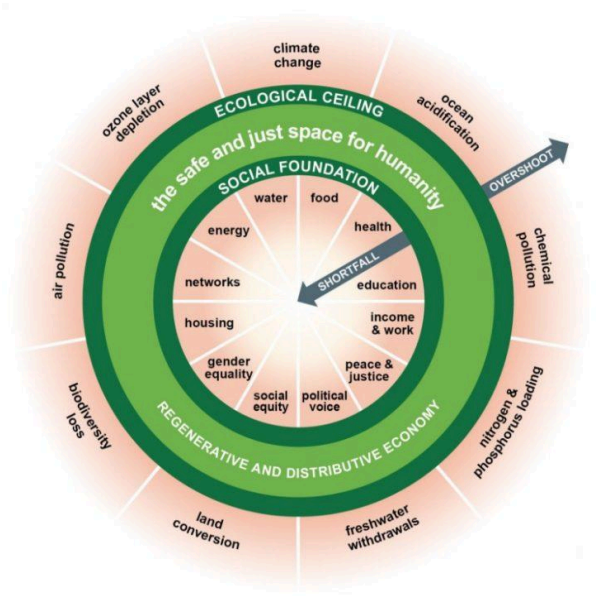
Why small changes can become big change

Small changes to fight climate change are meaningful, Science shows

A green and peaceful future - Greenpeace Blogpost

Doughnut Economy

Concept to make sure that humanity's essential needs like food, housing, healthcare and political voice are covered while ensuring that collectively we do not overshoot our pressure on Earth's life-supporting systems – such as a stable climate, fertile soils, and a protective ozone layer. The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries is a playfully serious approach to framing that challenge, and it acts as a compass for human progress this century.



[Short Video about the Doughnut Economy](https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/)
https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/

The growth of the maker movement

- Since 2003, the amount of Fab Labs in the world have grown exponentially, doubling every 18-24 months, at the same pace as Moore's Law apply for the amount of transistors in a microprocessor. (http://designingreality.org/)
  https://blog.p2pfoundation.net/70750-2/2018/05/04
- There are more than 1300 Fab Labs located in almost every major city in the world, as well as thousands of Maker Spaces and Hackerspaces.
- The Maker movement is becoming part of the agenda of big corporations and governments: http://time.com/104210/maker-faire-maker-movement/

Repair Cafes:

- Repair Cafés are free meeting places and they're all about repairing things (together). In the place where a Repair Café is located, you'll find tools and materials to help you make

any repairs you need. On clothes, furniture, electrical appliances, bicycles, crockery, appliances, toys, et cetera. You'll also find expert volunteers, with repair skills in all kinds of fields. Visitors bring their broken items from home. Together with the specialists they start making their repairs in the Repair Café. It's an ongoing learning process.

- There are over 1.500 Repair Cafés in 24 countries worldwide. Visit one in your area or start one yourself! See also the house rules we use at the Repair Café.
- On average, groups meet once a month at which around 25 repairs are made with a 70 percent success rate.
- 18,000 products are repaired each month under the Repair Café International umbrella, which equates to over 200,000 products per year. If one product weighs 1 kg [or 2.2 pounds], then Repair Café groups prevent 200,000 kgs [over 440,000 pounds/220 tons] of CO2 from being emitted each year."
- Stats from "*Sharing Cities: Activating the Urban Commons"*

Examples for Sharing Economy

- Warp It Reuse Network is a software service that creates internal marketplaces within organizations to make it easy for staff to get, give, and loan surplus stationery, furniture, and other equipment. Internal marketplaces can "friend" each other and trade assets across organizational boundaries, reducing waste and procurement demand. This creates a region wide network where the lifespan of goods is extended and new purchases are reduced.
- In the U.K., Warp It is used by over 50 percent of universities, 20 percent of health care, 30 percent of city councils, and 50 percent of Central Government Departments. Due to its success, it has also been launched in the U.S. and Australia.

FoodCloud:

• FoodCloud has distributed over 20 million meals in England and Ireland diverting over 9,000 tons of potential food waste from landfills.
• FoodCloud works with over 5,500 food industry and community partners.

The rise of the Commons

- The commons is a way to describe shared, material or immaterial property that is stewarded, protected or produced by a community – in an urban context often by citizens' collectives – and managed according to the rules and standards of that community.
- It is fundamentally distinct from state bodies – government, city, state – but also from market actors. The commons is independent of, but of course still holds relationships to, the government and the market.
- Commons as a new form of organisation is exemplified by a variety of initiatives based around production and consumption with the idea of achieving a more sustainable

society. This can for example be the set-up of energy cooperatives or shared work spaces for co-working.

- All around the world, cities and communities are experimenting with the concept of commons.
- Creative commons as a tool for sharing information and creative content widely online, has grown tremendously since its inception.
    - CC licensed works have nearly tripled in the last 5 years, from 400 million works to more than 1 billion
    - The English edition of Wikipedia has grown to 5,723,184 articles, equivalent to over 2,500 print volumes of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Including all language editions, Wikipedia has over 48 million articles,[1] equivalent to over 19,000 print volumes.

Platform Cooperativism

- Platform cooperativsm is a growing international movement that builds a fairer future of work. It's about social justice and the bottom line. While Uber and AirBnB are extracting value from individual workers, platform cooperatives are rooted in democratic ownership where co-op members, technologists, unionists, and freelancers create a concrete near-future alternative to the extractive sharing economy.
- Countless platform co-ops and initiatives supporting them have developed rapidly over the past two years.

- The cooperative platform ecosystem ranges from alternative financing models, labor brokerages for nurses, massage therapists, and cleaners, to cooperatively owned online marketplaces, and data-protection platforms for patients. https://platform.coop/directory

- A commons-oriented shift has been taking place in cities around the world, especially as evidenced in the following study on the urban commons:
    - In Ghent, Belgium, nearly 500 urban commons were identified, a tenfold increase in ten years, covering all the basic provisioning systems - car- and bike-sharing schemes, housing coops, co-housing, and community land trusts offer access to housing.
    - 80 of those 500 urban commons projects are food projects, in which organic farmers supplied food through a variety of commons-based schemes - creating healthy food for city dwellers, livelihoods for the producers, multi-stakeholder governance systems involving both producers and consumers (as in the community-supported agriculture projects), and meaningful work in an integrated ecosystem.
    - And as this report (focusing on the western world however) documents, such urban developments are simultaneously taking place in several cities around the world.

Facts & Figures Overconsumption

Plastic

- About 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic has been produced since the 1950s - the weight of roughly a billion elephants or 47 million blue whales[1]
- Since the 1950s, growth in the production of plastic has largely outpaced that of any other material with a global shift from the production of durable plastics to single-use plastics (including packaging). The production of plastic is largely reliant on fossil hydrocarbons, which are non-renewable resources. If the growth in plastic production continues at the current rate, by 2050 the plastic industry may account for 20% of the world's total oil consumption.[2]
- Only about 9% of this plastic has been recycled, 12% has been burned and the remaining 79% has ended up in landfills or the environment.
- over the last 10 years, we have produced more plastic than during the last century
- plastic accounts for around 10% of the total waste we generate
- The equivalent of a truckload of plastic enters the oceans every minute.
- There are five trillion pieces of plastic in our oceans – enough to circle the Earth over 400 times.
- Plastic in the ocean breaks down into small segments, and pieces of plastic from a 1L bottle can end up on every mile of beach throughout the world
- almost 500 billion plastic bags are used worldwide per year
- 500 million straws are produced each day in the United States alone, that's over a straw a day for each American!
- it takes 500-1,000 years for plastic to degrade
- plastic constitutes approximately 90% of all trash floating on the ocean's surface
- 44% of seabirds, 22% of cetaceans, sea turtles and a growing list of fish have been documented with plastic in or around their bodies
- plastic chemicals can be absorbed by the body
- Plastic producers are set to increase production by an additional 40% over the next decade.

Source: http://www.eblf.com/en/newsletter-CSRCorner-PlasticPollution

Find more plastic facts from Greenpeace here

[1] http://www.fao.org/3/a--i7677e.pdf
[2]https://www.euractiv.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/06/WED-REPORT-SINGLE-USE-PLASTICS.pdf

Fashion

- Since the rise of “Fast Fashion” in 2000, people buy twice as many clothes and wear them only half the time.
- Based on a study from 2016, Germans have around 5.2 billion items of clothing in their wardrobes. But 40 percent of that number - 2.08 billion pieces of clothing - are rarely or never used.
- A total of 64 percent of those surveyed admitted that they would stop wearing a piece of clothing because they had changed their taste in fashion.
- Almost a third meanwhile said that they would get rid of a piece of clothing to make room in their wardrobe for new clothes.
- Most of the clothes which are not wanted any more end up in the bin. Almost half of respondents admitted to throwing out clothes within the last six months
- Each year, more than 100 billion garments are produced - less than 1 % can be recycled into new textiles. The majority of clothes get resold on second hand markets, or downcycled.
- People in the US throw away 10.5 million tons of clothing to landfill each year - that’s 30 times as heavy as the empire state building
- It’s cheaper to buy new stuff than to repair something.
- We are loosing skills: In a UK survey every fourth respondent said they couldn’t sew on a button; every second couldn't repair a hole or fix a seam.
- Cheap polyester is the driver of Fast Fashion. More than 60 % of today’s clothes contain synthetic fibres made from crude oil. These clothes are not biodegradable, adding to landfills and air pollution created by incinerators.
- According to a study financed by the European Union, washing machines in Europe alone flush 30.000 tonnes of synthetic fibres into waste water every year that end up in the ocean, animal stomachs and our drinking water
- There are more microplastic particles in the ocean than stars in the galaxy

[See Factsheet on Fast Fashion here]
[Factsheet on microfibre ocean pollution]
[Shopping survey]

Facts on Smartphone Consumption

- **7.1 billion smartphones** have been produced since 2007. If all the phones ever made were still operational there would be nearly enough for everyone on the planet to have a smartphone.

- The average use time of a smartphone is estimated to be **just over 2 years--26 months.** (This is US data. Worldwide data not available). At this rate, if you lived to be 80 and got your first phone at 18, **you would own 29 smartphones in your lifetime.**

- While part of the increasing rate of smartphone sales is caused by first-time buyers, 78% is estimated to be attributed to existing smartphone consumers replacing their phones.[3]

- In 2014, **3 million metric tons of e-waste came from small IT products like smartphones**.[4]

- In 2014, **less than one sixth (16%) of global e-waste was estimated to been properly recycled or made available for reuse**.The rest went to landfills, incinerators, or dangerous informal disassembly operations.[5]

See full doc **here**

Forests & Paper Products

- Around 40 % of industrial wood goes to paper production. (1)
- The industrial nations- making up 15 % of global population- consume more than half of the world-wide manufactured paper, mostly for short term purposes. In contrast almost 60% of global population do not have enough paper for basic needs of hygiene, education and communication. (2)
- One kilo of primary fibre paper needs on average 2,2 kilos of wood, 5 kWh, 50 litres of water, and relevant C02 emissions due to forest loss and production. (3)
- Good quality waste paper for making modern recycling paper is increasingly in high global demand and its limited availability means more pressure on the world's forests (4)
- Worldwide around 300 million people are living in forests and for 1,6 billion people forests are the basis for existence. (5)
- Negative impacts of forest destruction and expansion of tree plantations can create land and human rights violations, forced displacements, and loss of livelihoods particularly for Indigenous Peoples.
- In the US alone, over 12,4 million trees and 13 billion gallons of water are consumed each year in the creation of paper receipts, generating 1,5 billion pounds of waste and 4 billion pounds of C02. (6)

(1) (Tissari J. / FAO Forestry Officer 2013: email notice of 2.4.2013; https://www.worldwildlife.org/industries/pulp-and-paper)

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[3] https://www.strategyanalytics.com/strategy-analytics/blogs/smart-phones/2016/12/23/78-of-global-smartphones-will-be-sold-to-replacement-buyers-in-2017#.WJ4VzJgrI_V

[4] ibid.

[5] https://unu.edu/news/news/ewaste-2014-unu-report.html

(2) (Verband Deutscher Papierfabriken vdp, Leistungsbericht 2015, p. 79 & 2018, p. 81; calculations of Robin Wood and FÖP)
(3) (FÖP Forum Ökologie & Papier (2012): Papier. Wald und Klima schützen, https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen/papier
(4) (Seidemann, C.; Tempel, L. / Papiertechnische Stiftung PTS (2015): Entwicklung Altpapierqualität – Ursachen und Folgen. Veränderte Altpapierzusammensetzung und ihr Einfluss auf die Faserqualität. In: Wochenblatt für Papierfabrikation 8/2015).

(http://action.greenamerica.org/p/dia/action4/common/public/?action_KEY=21094)

(5) (http://www.wwf.de/fileadmin/fm-wwf/Publikationen-PDF/Wald_Aktiv.pdf).
(6)

Meat & Dairy

- In 2018, we will kill 76 billion animals for meat and dairy consumption
- Agriculture, and livestock in particular, can be considered as one of the planet's biggest drivers of global biodiversity loss. In short, what we eat is making our planet sick.[6]
- The impact of meat and dairy production on the planetary processes that maintain life on Earth is so large that it threatens six out of nine key boundaries.[7]
- If all available crops were directly consumed by humans and not fed to animals, the global calorie availability could be increased by up to 70%.[8]
- Globally, approximately 75-80% of all agricultural land is used to produce fodder for livestock.[9]
- Total land used for livestock grazing equates to around 26% of the terrestrial surface of the planet.[10]
- The food system is also responsible for 80% of the deforestation.[11]
- Many scientists are concerned that the Earth is now undergoing a sixth mass extinction. Species extinction rates are now more than 1,000 times higher that of natural rates in the absence of human activities. We also know that global land-use change is associated with this widespread biodiversity loss. There is a strong correlation between the intensity of agricultural land-use and the loss of species. Around 80% of all threatened terrestrial bird and mammal species are threatened by agriculturally driven habitat loss.[12]

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[6] Greenpeace livestock vision towards 2050 - www.greenpeace.org/livestock_vision
[7] Greenpeace livestock vision towards 2050 - www.greenpeace.org/livestock_vision
[8] Greenpeace livestock vision towards 2050 - www.greenpeace.org/livestock_vision
Cassidy, E. S., West, P. C., Gerber, J. S., & Foley, J. A. 2013. Redefining agricultural yields: from tonnes to people nourished per hectare. Environmental Research Letters, 8: 34015.
[9] Greenpeace livestock vision towards 2050 - www.greenpeace.org/livestock_vision
Foley, J. A., et al. 2011. Solutions for a cultivated planet. Nature, 478: 337–342.
[10] Greenpeace livestock vision towards 2050 - www.greenpeace.org/livestock_vision
Ripple, W. J., et al. 2014. Ruminants, climate change and climate policy. Nature Climate Change, 4: 2–5.
[11] Greenpeace livestock vision towards 2050 - www.greenpeace.org/livestock_vision
[12] Greenpeace livestock vision towards 2050 - www.greenpeace.org/livestock_vision
Barnosky, A. D., et al. 2011. Has the Earth's sixth mass extinction already arrived? Nature, 471: 51–57.
Joppa, L. N. et al. (2016). Filling biodiversity threat gaps. Science, 352: 416–418.
Tilman, D., et al. 2017. Future threats to biodiversity and pathways to their prevention. Nature, 546: 73–81.

- Science suggests that changing our dietary preferences toward plant-rich diets will reduce environmental costs and feed millions of people with no additional natural resource use.[13]

See full factsheet here

Cities:

- Cities occupy 3% of the earth's surface, and they consume over 70% of its resources
- More than 70% of people will live in cities by 2050
- Cities account for more than 60% of global energy use, 70% of greenhouse gas emissions and 70% of global waste. Current practices are depleting the Earth's finite resources, changing its climate and damaging its natural ecosystems. With our planetary life support system in the red, we need to put cities on a serious resource diet - http://theconversation.com/our-cities-need-to-go-on-a-resource-diet-68984

The solutions:

- Fab City Manifesto
- Growing urban commons

[13] Greenpeace livestock vision towards 2050 - www.greenpeace.org/livestock_vision