



• 10 ADVICES

**HOW
TO CREATE A
SUSTAINABLE
YOUTH
PROJECT**



International youth projects with their variety of methods should not end up ignoring a sustainable orientation with corresponding calls for proposals or evaluations. Not only can our participants expect a mindful approach in the project, but the resources of the environment entrusted to us require our undivided attention in the same way.

The personal footprint, like that of the project, should be the measure of all the different phases of the project and thus be available as an important indicator. The importance of integrating the 17 UN Development Goals should not be underestimated.

In order to create an international youth project in a more sustainable way, we refer to ten points that have been developed over decades of our experience and which ultimately reflect the results of the initiative of the international youth workers.

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Mindful Partnerships

International youth projects require experienced and trustworthy actors and a management that is designed for the long term.

Each side should be committed to the very idea of sustainability which has to be reflected in their mission

- Prior partner check
- Exchange on own environmental strategies
- Joint search for innovative solutions
- Result-oriented agreements and planning steps

statement and consistently implemented in all activities of the participants.

Everyone involved needs to be aware of their responsibility and must not regard the action as a one-off event.



2

Green Mobility



Commuting is a concern on its own, and a significant one for this kind of projects. The most environmental-friendly way to get around is still by land, although bus journeys are often a better alternative if the capacity is good!

- Management of short distances
- Giving preference to public transport with strategic use of trains and buses
- Bikes or cargo bikes for the groups
- Compensation measures with regular update of individual consumption

Tip: A longer journey through different countries organised together by train is the best way to start. Possible tree planting activities should be considered in the programme.

3

Sustainable Sourcing

When buying food, local, seasonal, organic and predominantly vegetarian products should preferably end up in the shopping basket. Products with a mafia-free claim are also always a statement and an important alternative.

- Find and try meatless alternatives
- Buy local from small producers
- Self-sufficiency as a good and cheap alternative
- Inquire about seasonal and regional specialities
- Handle food carefully
- Use leftovers creatively, avoid food waste

Tip: Cooking together in a climate-friendly way in the tradition of the host country is always a challenging approach and encourages creativity.



4

Environmentally Friendly Management



A natural project environment outside of one's own facilities, for example in cooperation with local institutions, is often a good alternative.

Self-sufficient houses with high and comprehensible standards for electricity supply, regulated sewage processing (e.g. root purification system, composting toilets) including

mandatory waste separation in the organisers' portfolio should be considered here.

It can be difficult or even impossible to find a zero-impact venue, but there are often certain alternatives. In any case, a venue with minimal environmental impact should win the tender.

- Critically examine venues in this regard
- Avoiding plastic waste when supplying drinking water
- Joint creation of a composting system or solar garden shower

Tip: Well-organised trips with camping facilities are recommended for such projects and are valuable in terms of group-dynamic.

5

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Sustainability is to be understood as a cross-sectional task that touches very different areas of living together and thus also addresses certain programme elements of environmental education.

- Systemic approach in the open curriculum
- Dialogical collegial cooperation
- Personal and project-related *Footprint Calculation*

This educational mandate aims at sensitising each individual and focuses on personal consumption behaviour.

Tip: The implementation of a fair breakfast, a consumption critical city tour, activities on mobile phones, textile industry, tourism raises awareness of more conscious consumption behaviour.



6

Democractic Decision-Making



Certain project approaches could specifically address the causes and social effects of corruption, mafia structures, nationalist and populist movements as well as flight and migration.

Important decisions should grow democratically, collegially or sociocratically in the sense of the group.

- Memorial education – underpinned by oral history
- Interaction with civil society and activists
- General implementation of environmental justice
- Integration of contacts with politicians and administration

Tip: A conceptual inclusion of contemporary witnesses and those affected by climate change, acts of war, flight, mafia violence, refugees, as well as certain democracy movements is advisable.

7

Acting in Solidarity for Global Justice

Project contacts with a view beyond one's own nose, where environmental and fair-trade ideas have a lot of space. An extensive range of activities opens up when groups want to tackle and shape something on site with commitment and their own hands-on work.

- Global networking through partnerships in the global South e.g. with local cooperatives
- Contacts with indigenous and marginalised people
- Economy of the common good as a social-ecological alternative
- Making practical impact in the according project

Tip: It is also worth establishing such contacts digitally when, for example, women from the global south provide impressive information about the situation on the ground from their daily projects or organisational life.

Gaining knowledge and long-term added value on both sides can justify a long journey. It should be noted that this extended type of direct meetings always demands certain organisational resources and requires a significant amount of preparation and implementation.





Conscious Peace and Dialogue Work



Reflective-critical thinking is an important skill that helps us to make informed decisions, recognise fake news and expose greenwashing, thus promoting thus competences in the participants.

A holistic approach includes the development of common rules for everyday project life, to act more consciously with each other in these contexts, in order to be able to recognise certain consequences better.

- With a focus on fair and mindful cooperation
- Through definite steps in mutual respect
- Through fairly balanced options for action
- Practising non-verbal forms of communication in dialogue

Tip: Collective participation in public actions such as peaceful protests and demonstrations (e.g. climate strike/CSD) may be suitable as an introductory statement or basis for discussion.

Ethical Ethnic Coexistence

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A coherent approach is of central importance in order to promote and establish ethical and ethnic coexistence. Non-violent communication and shared conflict management are fundamental prerequisites for solidarity and togetherness.

Participation of people from un-

- Include refugee shelters in activities
- Involve e.g. Ukrainian or Sorbian youths
- Highlight the reasons for worldwide migratory movements
- Use a theatre (of the oppressed) methodology as a form of action
- Try out interreligious encounter formats

derrepresented groups or with migration backgrounds should be particularly supported. This guarantees the inclusion of multiple perspectives and a sustainable cross-cultural exchange. Experiences of refugeeism, exclusion and disadvantage thus come into focus and are a natural part of an exchange.



Tip: With reference to the global ethic, contact and exchange with mosque, synagogue and monastery communities, as well as alternative groups and housing projects, among others, bring very special added value and sometimes an unexpected change of perspective.

10

Credibility and authenticity



Sustainable projects require a high degree of seriousness and personal integrity. Especially in ecological terms, coherence is crucial. Implementation strategies should be guided by a common basic ethic.

It should always remain in everyone's mind that such formats carry a

high degree of relevance, both in terms of the contents and political agenda with regard to the overall social context. This claim applies especially to an efficient and comprehensible, goal-oriented and responsible use of the available resources, e.g. public funds, association funds, donations, etc.

- Process- and resource-oriented partnership-based action
- Initiation of a broad social discourse
- CO₂ compensation for unavoidable emissions
- Best practices through sustainable project activities
- Comprehensible evaluation strategies

Tip: Dealing with current issues while taking into account local as well as global sustainability criteria such as the 17 UN Development Goals forms the decisive basic framework for such sustainable encounter projects.

Only with personal commitment and authentic engagement we all can make a decisive contribution to the social success of youth projects and the associated transformation processes.