



A guide to

Green Action Week 2018

Green Action Week is a global campaign to promote sustainable consumption. Each year in October, organisations around the world take joint action to promote a common cause.





Last year, 53 civil society organisations in 29 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas took part under the theme: "Organic food and farming for all".


A new theme for Green Action Week: "Sharing Community"

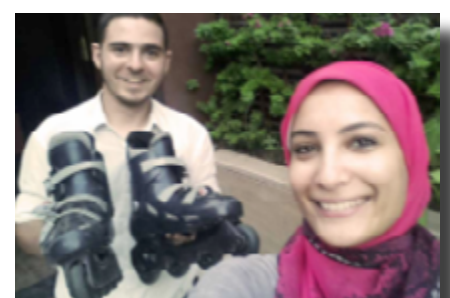
"We want to ignite cultures of sharing & collaboration to make sure everyone has sustainable access to goods and services."

What is the focus of this new theme?

 We do not want to focus on the 'product'.

 We do not want to focus on 'the system'.

 We want to focus on the community.



In the rest of this guide:

- 1) Green Action Week participants Nathalie & Julia talk more about the new theme.
- 2) Frequently Asked Questions
- 3) Advice on how to plan activities





Nathalie

Hi, I'm Nathalie, I like to swim and hang out with friends & family, and I am a board member of [Consumers Lebanon](#).

...and I'm Julia from Brazil. When I'm not hiking or cycling, I work for the [Brazilian Institute of Consumer Education](#).

We both took part in Green Action Week before, and so the organisers asked us to help explain the new theme

This is a guide for activists and organisations who might want to take part in Green Action Week 2018 (like us).



Julia

This is how the new theme was explained to us in a paragraph:

Sharing Community

"Access to goods and services is unequal and planetary boundaries are being breached.

Green Action Week wants to ignite cultures of sharing and collaboration, as a way to create **sustainable access** for more people, and at the same time reduce stress on the planet.

We want to challenge the **norm of private ownership** and consumerism and help create strong, collaborating communities."

"Sustainable access" is a bit confusing - what does that mean?

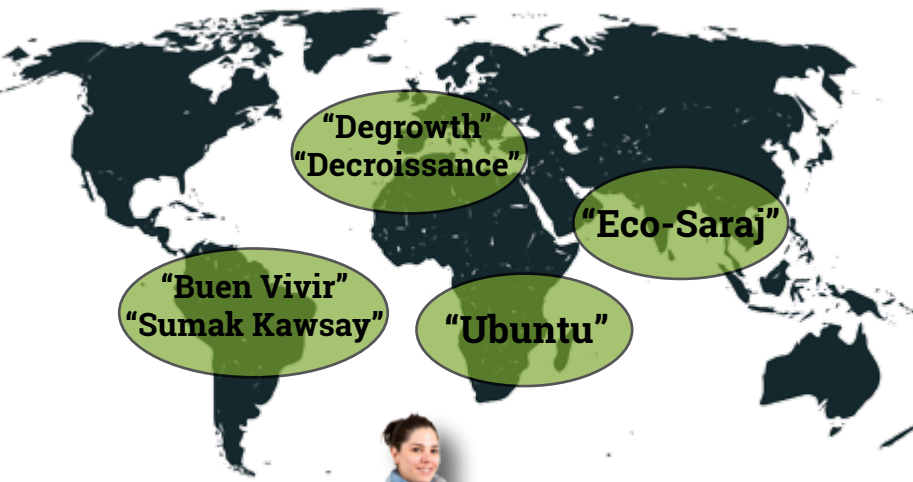
I think it means access to goods and services without major social or environmental damage.

"Challenge the norm of private ownership"?

I think this means that you don't just have to buy things and services. If we can borrow things rather than own them, that would be very good.

My first reaction to this theme was the saying: 'Sharing is caring!' :D

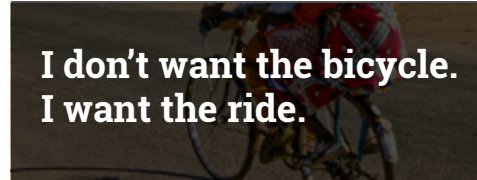
I enjoyed the positive suggestion in the final sentence.



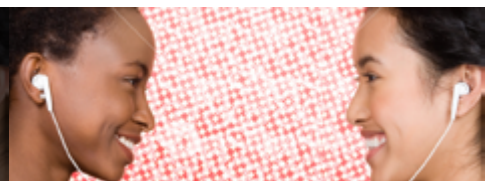
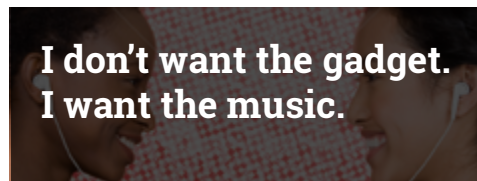
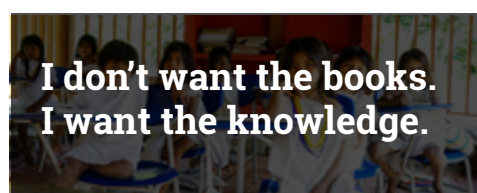
If I tried to explain this theme in Brazil, I would probably first remind people how we used to have the habit of sharing, but we have been losing it over time.

I would give the example of "Tem Açúcar?" ("Do you have sugar?") a popular app where you publish what you need and share with your neighbours. It's an example of new technology bringing back old habits. And I like the idea of showing that sharing is not a new, foreign fashion, but a positive part of our own culture which we can bring back.

I like it - in Arabic we also use the word 'Sharek' for this kind of sharing



I also really liked [this TED Talk about 'collaborative consumption'](#), which could be a really clear, simple message to understand this theme: "We use it, not own it".



So Nathalie, if I described Green Action Week as a campaign that happens all around the world in several countries, which is working on sustainable consumption and the circular economy with the theme: 'Sharing Community', would that make sense?

I work on 'the circular economy', but if I was a beginner I would find that a hard phrase to understand, how would you explain it?

It's a new type of economy that tries to be more inclusive, and sustainable too. So we can access services and goods without waste. So it's not linear (in a straight line), but circular, to not waste anything.



So if you give me your jacket because it's too small on you, is that the circular economy you're talking about? ;-)

Kind of! Maybe we then give it to our neighbours, or dye the jacket and change the colour!

And would you say it is about environmental benefits, or financial benefits?

I don't think that it is wrong for there to be financial benefits, there are definitely economic benefits from 'Sharing Community', but you can also do it for free or loan...

...it's good for community *and* good for the planet.

Exactly, there's a famous Brazilian phrase "Gentiliza gera Gentiliza" ('Kindness creates kindness'). If you share with people around you, you receive also, and the whole community benefits.



Frequently Asked Questions

Why has the theme changed?

We are moving from the previous theme ('organic food and farming for all') to 'Sharing Community' so we can focus on a culture of sharing which is key to a stronger, more sustainable life.

Can I still submit a campaign which involves organic food?

If the main objective of your campaign is about sharing goods and services within communities, yes. If it is mainly promoting consumption or production of organic food, no.

Is this theme about Recycling or Upcycling?

It could be. But recycling/upcycling is about making new 'things' from old 'things'. Sharing community is about how we share and collaborate in our communities to create sustainable access for all.

Is this theme about sharing apps like Uber or AirBnB?

Technology can be part of the solution (like in Julia's example, above) but we are mainly interested in the people and communities who do the sharing, not the technology that helps them do it (especially if that technology is not shared and owned by the community, like a lot of 'sharing economy' apps)

How do I plan an activity for Green Action Week?

These are questions you should ask yourself when planning your activity for Green Action Week 2018.

- Why** are you doing this? (The problem you want to solve)
- Who** are your audiences? (Partners as well as targets)
- What** will you ask them to do? (Your 'call to action')
- Where** will you reach them? (This can be your activity plan)
- Does this fit **'Sharing Community'**? (Alignment with theme)

If you are interested in understanding the theory of how to better communicate to people about sustainable lifestyles in general, you can read more in ["Communicating Sustainable Lifestyles", a guide from the United Nations Environmental Programme:](#)

STEP ONE: Understand Audiences



Stakeholder-Focused:

Engage in participatory, relevant, and grounded ways.

STEP TWO: Set Goals



Better Living:

Focus on aspirations. Create a compelling vision based on values.



Impact:

Set clear goals and demonstrate sustainability results.

STEP THREE: Determine Strategies



Systemic:

Consider the systemic nature of lifestyles.



Dynamic Life Changes:

Take advantage of life stages and transitions.



Diversity:

Accommodate the diversity in lifestyles.



Collective Action:

Show that lifestyles extend beyond individual action.

STEP FOUR: Measure and Respond



Responsive:

Learn and adapt to changing conditions. Create a culture of learning by listening to participants throughout the life of a campaign.

What do we do now?

1. Questions?

You can send questions about this guide or Green Action Week 2018 to info@greenactionweek.org

2. Webinar

A webinar to help you plan and explore the theme will be scheduled during April & May. You will receive an invitation.

You can [create an account on the Green Action Week website](#), where you can also discuss the theme, activities, and learn from each other in our online forum.

3. More background information

- [‘A Wider Circle?’](#) - The Circular Economy in Developing Countries.
- [‘The Sharing Economy in Developing Countries’](#).
- [‘Closing the Loop’](#) - The benefits of the circular economy in developing and emerging economies.

