



Nordic Council
of Ministers



GENERATION 2030

Nordic Youth As Sustainable Changemakers

IN THE TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE
CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



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CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Kristoffer Ravnbøl and Ida Neergaard (Naboskab)

Editor: Fanny Rehula (Nordic Council of Ministers)

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Nordic Council of Ministers

Nordens Hus

Ved Stranden 18

DK-1061 Copenhagen K

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CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

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Summary

In what is considered to be the biggest movement on climate change ever, young people around the world are demanding action. Nordic youth are leading the way as sustainable changemakers in the Nordics, but are concerned and frustrated by the lack of political action. They are now demanding more ambitious and radical action from politicians and decision-makers to bring about change in our current system of production and consumption.

Climate change, loss of biodiversity, and overconsumption are major concerns among Nordic youth, more so than other generations. Nordic youth are also more ambitious, more prepared, more willing to pay and sacrifice more, and they are demanding more radical action from politicians than other age groups.

This analysis examines the attitudes of Nordic youth aged 13-30 in relation to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG 12) on Sustainable Consumption and Production. The analysis is based on 1211 quantitative survey responses and 17 in-depth qualitative interviews with leading *young sustainable changemakers* in the Nordic countries.¹

CONCERNED, BUT READY TO TAKE ACTION

According to the survey and interviews, 88 % of young people in the Nordic region are very or extremely concerned about climate change issues, with women/girls being more concerned than boys/men. The concerns are both local and global, particularly ocean plastic pollution, the effects of climate change, and the loss of biodiversity.

However, more than 93 % think that a sustainable lifestyle is important, and 83 % are ready to take even more action. Nordic youth, and the young sustainable changemakers, are already taking action in the form of sorting waste, avoiding food waste, eating vegetarian food, and choosing green mobility. Only a small proportion of young people are taking action in the form of demonstrations and protests.

LACK OF ADULT ROLE MODELS

The analysis shows that the main source of inspiration for young people is other young people. The young sustainable changemakers in particular can inspire others through their actions as activists, bloggers, influencers, entrepreneurs, politicians, students, and professional workers. Young people gain little inspiration from political leaders, and the young sustainable changemakers are calling for more adult role models. Key motivations highlighted in the analysis are making a difference and improving quality of life by living sustainably. Communicating the positive aspects, rather than the 'sacrifices', could help inspire more people to live sustainable lives.

¹ We refer to the respondents in the survey as 'young people', 'surveyed youth' and 'Nordic youth' when we present the quantitative results collected by the survey. Informants from the in-depth qualitative interviews are referred to as 'young sustainable changemakers'. See Appendix 1 and 2 for more information.



BARRIERS TO ACTION

Forty-seven percent of young people in the Nordic region find sustainable living and consumption difficult, while only 25 % find it easy. The main barriers are not money or lack of information, but rather the lack of sustainable products, certifications, and political reforms and regulation. This suggests that information campaigns and price incentives are less important than making sustainable products, choices, and services more convenient and available for (young) consumers.

A CALL FOR ACTION

Nordic youth regard individuals, politicians, and companies as being responsible for taking immediate action to create a sustainable society.

Of these, they see politicians as most responsible. The call for action should be seen as a democratic manifestation of young people's concerns, hopes, and demands for action before it is too late. The results of this analysis should be seen as recommendations and insights for politicians, decision-makers, business leaders, and others to implement policies, regulations, products, and services that enforce sustainable production and consumption. Hopefully this analysis will be seen as an opportunity to involve young people and let them inspire others to take the necessary action towards achieving sustainable consumption and production and the 2030 Agenda, and to help protect future generations of humans, animals, plants, and ecosystems.



Introduction

The Nordic countries have committed to work towards attainment of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations (UN) in September 2015. The Nordic countries generally rank highly on progress towards the 17 SDGs, but SDG 12, Sustainable Consumption and Production, is considered one of the most difficult to achieve.² The Nordic Council of Ministers adopted the Generation 2030 programme in September 2017. In the programme, Sustainable Consumption and Production was chosen as a prioritised theme for the period 2017-2020. Generation 2030 also has a strong emphasis on the involvement of young people as actors for change.

YOUTH AS ACTORS FOR CHANGE

Nordic youth are very concerned about climate change, loss of biodiversity, and overconsumption, and are more concerned than other age groups.³ According to the latest annual survey on Danes' knowledge and opinions of climate change (Klimabarometeret 2018), young people reported significantly different answers and opinions about climate. Compared to other age groups, young people aged 18-29 are, in general, more concerned about climate change, feel politicians should be more ambitious, are prepared for society to pay and invest more in a sustainable transition, and are more inclined to feel that politicians should adopt policies that limit climate change through consumption. Young people also believe more in individual actions and lifestyle changes than

in technological developments to help solve the problem of climate change.

Young people all around the world are demanding action on the climate issue. Since Greta Thunberg started the climate strikes in August 2018, her movement has spread from Sweden and the Nordics to the rest of the world. Climate protests have been planned in more than 1600 cities, in 125 countries, and more than 1.6 million people have been involved. This is the biggest global movement ever on climate action.⁴ Some commentators even draw parallels with the early stages of the youth protests in the late 1960s. Not only are young people demanding action from decision-makers, they are also leading the way by taking action and serving as drivers in the transformation to a sustainable society. Young people are leading sustainable lifestyles, forming movements and companies, joining political organisations, and exerting influence through blogs. By leading the way and taking action, Nordic youth can inspire and motivate, not only other young people, but also politicians and decision-makers, in taking action.

But what are the specific concerns, motivations, inspirations, actions, approaches, and demands of this generation of young people in the Nordic countries? To understand this, we must look at both young people in general, but also those who are leading the way. By studying the actions of young Nordic sustainable changemakers, we could

² Sustainable Consumption and Production. Nordic Council of Ministers (2018)

³ CONCITO, Klimabarometeret 2018

⁴ CNN, 29 May 2019

learn what drives them, and use those insights to inspire other young people. Here, Greta is far from being alone in the Nordic countries. Many others are leading the way as young sustainable changemakers and role models through political engagement, movements, protests, entrepreneurial initiatives, education, blogging, and professional careers.

ABOUT THIS ANALYSIS

This analysis focuses on young people aged 13-30 in the Nordic countries, and how they relate to Sustainable Consumption and Production (SDG12). The analysis has examined young people's concerns, motivation, inspiration, actions, approaches, recommendations and demands in relation to sustainable consumption and living. The analysis has also considered specific themes relating to sustainable consumption and lifestyles with a focus on food, electronics, waste, plastic, fashion, travel, and transportation.

This analysis provides insights that can inspire politicians and decision-makers, businesses, and citizens to take action for a sustainable society. By showing how young people in general, and the young sustainable changemakers in particular, relate to, understand, and act on sustainable consumption, the analysis indicates the need for concrete actions for a sustainable society on both individual and systemic levels. The analysis is based on extensive quantitative and qualitative research and data collected in April-May 2019.

QUANTITATIVE INSIGHTS

A total of 1211 survey responses were collected from young people in the Nordic countries, including the autonomous regions of the Faroe Islands, Åland, and Greenland. Data was collected through a digital survey distributed to various youth organisations across the Nordic countries. The responses are not representative of the Nordic region in itself, but the data does indicate and highlight certain themes and connections in relation to sustainable consumption and living.

QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

A total of 17 in-depth qualitative interviews were held with Nordic young sustainable changemakers. Most were conducted over Skype, using a semi-structured interview guide. Some interviews were conducted in the respective home countries of the informants in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. The sustainable changemakers were selected for interviews on the basis of age, ethnicity, country, education, gender, as well as their approach to sustainable consumption. For a list of the sustainable changemakers with some background information see Appendix 1. Qualitative insights were also gathered through participation in and observations during a series of conferences and youth events in Denmark and Iceland.

Nordic Youth and the Sustainable Transformation

The analysis identifies how concerned young people are about sustainability, and the extent to which they are prepared to live more sustainably. The analysis is divided into six sections: **Concerns and Worries, Approaches and Actions, Inspiration and Motivation, Barriers and Obstacles, Responsibility and Change, and Recommendations.**

In **Concerns and Worries**, we show that 89 % of young people in the Nordic region are very or extremely concerned about issues of climate change. The concerns, which are both local and global, are about in particular ocean plastic, natural disasters arising from global warming, and loss of biodiversity. More than 93 % think that a sustainable lifestyle is important, and 83 % are ready to take even more action.

In **Approaches and Actions**, we analyse how Nordic youth and young sustainable changemakers are already taking action in terms of sorting waste, avoiding food waste, eating vegetarian food, buying second-hand products, and choosing green mobility. Through five personas we show how the sustainable changemakers are pushing for change as politicians, activists, entrepreneurs, influencers, or students and professionals.

In the section **Inspiration and Motivation**, we see that young people are inspired by other young people, but are calling for more adult role models. Political leaders are among the least

inspiring figures. A key motivation highlighted by changemakers is making a difference and an improved quality of life, so communicating the positive aspects rather than the 'sacrifices' could help inspire more people to adopt a sustainable lifestyle.

In **Barriers and Obstacles**, we analyse barriers to change. Of the respondents, 83 % are ready to take more action, but 47 % are finding it difficult. The main barriers are not money or information, but rather the lack of sustainable products, lack of certifications, and lack of political reforms and regulation. This suggests that information and price incentives are less important than greater convenience and availability for the conscious (young) consumers.

The section **Responsibility and Change** looks at responsibility from the perspectives of individuals, politicians, and business. Young people feel that politicians are most responsible, and are calling for more ambitious and radical changes to make consumption and production sustainable.

In the final section, **Recommendations**, we present young people's suggestions to other young people on how to become a sustainable changemaker. The chapter also highlights and describes the demand for politicians and decision-makers to speed up the transition to sustainable consumption and production.

Concerns and Worries

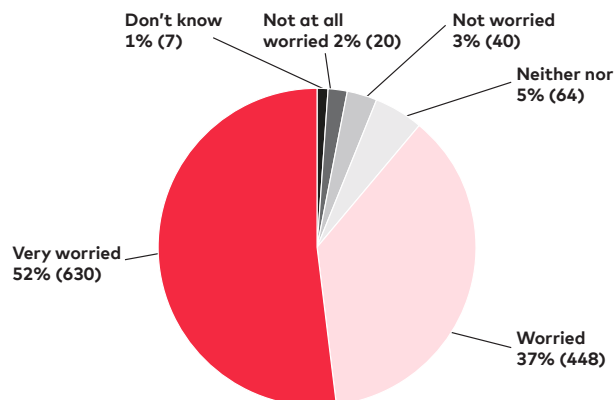
The young people in the survey are very or extremely concerned about the future in relation to climate and environment. Their greatest concerns relate to major global issues of ocean plastic, global warming, loss of biodiversity, and our overconsumption of resources. The lack of political action is exacerbating young people's concerns.

YOUTH ARE VERY CONCERNED

The survey shows that 89 % of young people in the Nordic region are very concerned or extremely concerned about the future in relation to the climate and environment. Females are generally more concerned than males, with 12 % of males not concerned at all compared with 3 % of females. This is in line with other studies showing that women care more about the environment than men.⁵ Young people in Greenland, Åland, and the Faroe Islands tend to be slightly less concerned compared to the other Nordic countries.

Most respondents say that their biggest concerns are plastic in the ocean (91 %), the consequences of global warming (89 %), the loss of biodiversity (87 %), and overconsumption of resources (86 %). The number of different topics that worry young people is significant. More than 70 % of the respondents are very or extremely concerned about seven or more of the top nine topics in the survey. Around 2 % of the respondents are not concerned at all about any of the nine topics listed (except for natural disasters).

HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT THE FUTURE IN TERMS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE?



PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SURVEY WHO ARE WORRIED OR EXTREMELY WORRIED ABOUT:

1. Plastics in the ocean: 91 %
2. Global warming (e.g. sea-level rises, floods, melting ice, and droughts): 89 %
3. Loss of biodiversity (extinction of species): 87 %
4. Overconsumption of natural resources: 86 %
5. Increased waste production (e.g. electronics and food waste): 81 %
6. Air pollution: 78 %
7. Poor water quality: 78 %
8. Chemicals and pesticides: 66 %
9. Environmental accidents (e.g. oil spills): 63 %

⁵ <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/43/4/567/2630509?redirectedFrom=fulltext>



A number of other surveys show that youth are the most concerned demographic group when it comes to climate change.⁶ According to the annual survey of the green think tank CONCITO, the number of young Danes who see climate change as a very serious problem has risen from 55 % in 2016 to 71 % in 2018.⁷

INCREASED AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE

Young people's rising concerns are perhaps the result of an increased focus in the media on melting ice caps, ocean plastic, and other topics relating to global warming and overconsumption. New reports on climate are drawing attention to the consequences of global warming, such as the IPCC report⁸ on Global Warming at 1.5°C or the

UN report on biodiversity, confirming an increased rate of extinction of species.⁹

Young people today have a much higher level of knowledge of climate change compared to other age groups.¹⁰ With access to and use of social media 24/7, news travels faster and from all over the globe. Young people generally use social media more than other age groups, so they receive more information about global climate issues like forest fires in California, droughts in Africa, and rainstorms in East Asia. Many of the sustainable changemakers mention having witnessed some of the consequences in their own countries; more extreme weather in the Nordic countries, the heatwaves of 2018, forest fires in Sweden, and

⁶ <https://via.ritzau.dk/pressemeddelelse/unge-bekymrer-sig-mest-om-klimaet?publisherId=3427042&releaselId=13570422>

⁷ https://energiwatch.dk/Energinyt/Politik___Markeder/article10827312.ece

⁸ <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

⁹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>

¹⁰ https://energiwatch.dk/Energinyt/Politik___Markeder/article10827312.ece

more heavy rain. Nordic youth are therefore well-informed and concerned about both global and local issues.

OVERCONSUMPTION AND STRESS

Like the young people in the survey, the young sustainable changemakers interviewed are very concerned about climate and the environment. For most of them, their concerns started at a very young age and many have experienced climate anxiety throughout their youth. Generally, the young sustainable changemakers are more focused on the big picture and the necessary systematic transformation. They are concerned about the unsustainable system of production and consumption. They problematise the current manner of generating growth in the capitalist system, and how overconsumption and the throw-away culture is damaging the environment. Young sustainable changemakers also highlight how consumption patterns might increase stress levels and reduce the level of well-being. As one Icelandic young girl said at the conference in Reykjavik 2019:

"We're buying things we don't need, for money we don't have, to impress people we don't even like."

CONCERNED ABOUT CLIMATE INJUSTICE

Another major concern highlighted by the young sustainable changemakers is the injustice of climate change. Many poor countries will be disproportionately affected by climate change caused by the consumption and production of industrialised countries. The sustainable changemakers also mention climate injustice towards animals, plants, and ecosystems, which will suffer even more. The sustainable changemakers also see these human and animal rights perspectives as an important part of dealing with sustainable production and consumption.

NO POLITICAL ACTION

The interviews with the young sustainable changemakers showed they are very concerned about the complete lack of action from politicians, who do no more than talk about climate change. They see things getting worse, but still no action. The survey respondents feel frustrated that it is only young people taking action. The combination of increased awareness and knowledge about global climate crisis with lack of political action exacerbates the growing concern and worry.



"Everything started when I was a kid, 11 years old. I got climate anxiety right away. I felt it was my duty to save the world, as an 11-year-old girl. It affected me a lot, and I got scared."

JULIA DEGERTH, 25, Finland.



"The politics of our governments today are destroying nature. It's paradoxical that they [politicians] keep talking about climate crisis as our biggest challenge, while they continue to do what is causing the climate crisis."

GAUTE EITERJORD, 23, Norway.



"Our society is not built to gain economically from reuse (...) We are facing these challenges now because we created a society based on consumption and having everything available at your fingertips. I think we need to start questioning this."

TESS WALTENBURG, 26, Sweden.

Approaches and Actions

Young people in the Nordic region are taking different approaches towards adopting a sustainable lifestyle. Most of their actions relate to food, reuse, and transportation, while a smaller percentage are taking part in protests, joining political parties, and calculating personal CO2 footprints. Sustainable changemakers can be divided into five groups: the politician, activist, influencer, entrepreneur, and student/professional. Each of them represent a different approach to improving sustainability.

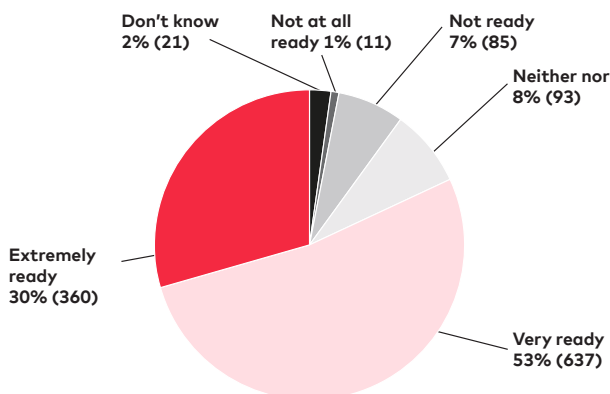
READY TO MAKE AN EFFORT

The survey shows that 93 % say it is important or very important to live and consume sustainably, and 83 % state that they are very ready or extremely ready to make an effort and take action for sustainable development. The gender gap is again evident, with 88 % of girls/women very ready or extremely ready to make an effort compared to 68 % of boys/men. Most of the young people and sustainable changemakers are taking action, rooted in everyday habits, that can help promote more sustainable consumption and lifestyles. In the following, we examine the actions young people are taking.

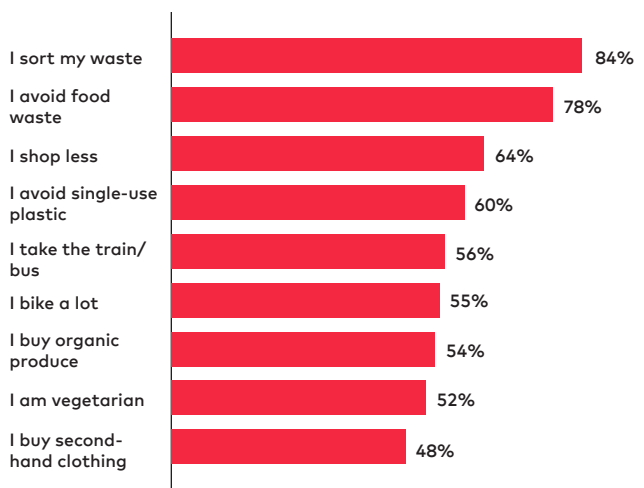
SORTING WASTE AND FOOD WASTE

The most common actions taken are sorting waste (84 %) and avoiding food waste (78 %). With recent initiatives and campaigns from municipalities in many Nordic cities to promote the sorting of waste, this makes sense. A focus on food waste has also been high on the agenda at both national and EU-level, possibly increasing awareness of this issue. The figure of 84 % of young people sorting waste is a lot higher than the average figure for the population in the Nordic countries. However, it is important to take into account that the numbers are based on the young people's self-reporting, rather than actual

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU READY TO MAKE AN EFFORT FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT/ THE ENVIRONMENT/CLIMATE?



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS APPLY TO YOU?





behaviour. Fifty-two percent report that they eat vegetarian or vegan food, or avoid foods with a high climate footprint, such as dairy products or meat, and 54 % report that they buy organic produce. These responses show that consumption of food, food waste, and sorting waste are generally areas where Nordic youth are taking action.

REUSE OVER SINGLE-USE

The survey shows that 64 % are buying less and 48 % are buying second-hand clothing. These numbers are similar to those reported in a national survey by DBA in Denmark, showing that buying second-hand is rising year by year.¹¹ In this survey, 60 % of the respondents state that they avoid single-use plastic. This could reflect the

recent debates and focus on plastic pollution in the ocean and the EU Parliament ban of single-use plastic from 2021.¹² Interviews with the sustainable changemakers show clearly that they are willing to sacrifice consumption and comfort for more climate action. They also emphasise the positive effects of the reuse economy enabling products to be purchased more cheaply.

POLITICAL ACTION

Of the survey respondents, 40 % report that they vote for political parties that prioritise climate or that they are engaged in a political youth organisation¹³, and 21 % state they are politically engaged for the environment in some other way. With the focus on climate change in the recent national elections in the Nordic countries,

¹¹ <https://guide.dba.dk/media/992973/genbrugsindekset-2018.pdf>

¹² <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20190321IPR32111/parliament-seals-ban-on-throwaway-plastics-by-2021>

¹³ Only 5 % of Greenlandic youth vote for political parties that prioritise climate or are engaged in a political youth organisation. This could be due to a lower level of concern and the low turnout in elections for the Danish Parliament.

this is understandable. However, perhaps most interesting is that only 18 % engage in strikes and protests, which seems low compared to other actions taken by young people. This might also be surprising considering the focus on climate school strikes in the media.¹⁴ This could suggest that Nordic youth as a larger group are focusing more on their individual habits and choices rather than broader actions such as protesting, political activism, or starting a company or a movement.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a major aspect of sustainable consumption for young people; 56 % report that they take trains or buses instead of driving a car, and 40 % travel by trains or buses instead of flying or driving. These are very high figures compared to other age groups in the Nordic region. However, as car ownership is generally lower among young people, this is perhaps not surprising. A recent study suggests that Swedes flew less in 2018 than 2017, which is the first time since the financial crisis in 2008.¹⁵ This could be explained by the term *flygskam*, or 'flight shame', and campaigning to reduce air travel, such as by the Swedish teen climate activist Greta Thunberg. Flight shame has not had the same traction in the other Nordic countries.

OTHER INSIGHTS

Every fourth respondent (26 %) says they are studying to learn more about climate and sustainability. This is similar to many of the interviewed sustainable changemakers, who use

education to learn more on their journey towards sustainable living. The smallest proportion on the list is for starting a sustainable company or movement (4 %), which are not everyday or habitual actions such as buying food or clothes, or choosing transportation. There are big differences between the Nordic countries when it comes to measuring CO2 footprint. While 34 % of young people in Norway, 32 % in Sweden and 30 % in Finland measure their CO2 footprint, the percentage in Denmark is 11 % and in Greenland 0 %. The figures are striking, but not surprising if it is considered how the debate about a zero-waste lifestyle is uncommon in Denmark compared to Finland, Sweden and Norway.

SUSTAINABLE CHANGEMAKERS' ACTION

The Nordic young sustainable changemakers generally take the same actions as other young people. They report buying second hand, sorting and limiting waste, avoiding single-use products, buying long-lasting products, repairing products, not driving a car, using public transportation, limiting air travel, and generally cutting back on consumption. However, they differ in terms of the extent or amount of initiatives they choose to implement in their everyday lives. For instance, almost all the interviewed sustainable changemakers are vegetarians/vegans compared to the 52 % of young people responding to the survey. In the following chapter, we present five different approaches for driving the transformation to a sustainable society. We have created five *personas* that represent different ways of taking sustainable action.

¹⁴ In 'Concerns and worries' young people are worried about major global issues, like plastic in the oceans and global warming, but when it comes to action, they focus more on everyday habits and less on getting involved in politics.

¹⁵ <https://www.thelocal.se/20190411/reader-voices-how-do-internationals-in-sweden-feel-about-the-growing-anti-flying-campaigns>

FIVE APPROACHES BY SUSTAINABLE CHANGEMAKERS



THE POLITICIAN

The young politician pushes for systemic changes and political reforms of the way we produce and consume, by engaging in a political youth organisation or a political party.

"I try to participate in the decision-making process in official ways and also delivering the student and youth perspective."

ELSA MARÍA GUÐLAUGS DRÍFUDÓTTIR, 24, Iceland.



THE ACTIVIST

The young activist tries to influence politicians and companies from the outside, by arranging strikes, participating in debates, and sending suggestions to politicians.

"I've opened exhibitions, written posts, held appeals, demonstrated, recruited, sat in committees, arranged collections. I've picked litter, participated in climate summits and talked to the press."

PENELOPE LEA, 14, Norway.



THE ENTREPRENEUR

The young entrepreneur gets an idea and transforms it into a concept at the workplace, an organisation or company. Some seek influence through a company, and others start their own business.

"The reason we started our company was so we could make the biggest impact. My approach is very logical (...) and I think that global warming is our biggest challenge, so we're working on developing a solution for that."

OLIVER MARTINSEN, 23, Denmark.



THE INFLUENCER

The influencer conveys experiences of living and consuming more sustainably to everyone with an interest in living more sustainably.

"I'm trying to address everyone. I want to make everyone think. Solutions that are applicable for most people (...). I want to show people that it is not expensive to live sustainably. It has to be convenient and fun."

OTSO SILLANAUKKEE, 25, Finland.



THE STUDENT / PROFESSIONAL

The student is studying to help solve climate change through her/his professional career.

"I'm going to study Environmental Change and Management. This is because I believe this is what we need to handle climate change and its consequences (...) I want to understand how it's all connected, and how I can personally affect it."

HENRIETTA FLODELL, 25, Sweden.



Inspiration and Motivation

Young people in the Nordic region are inspired by other young people to take action. They also get inspiration from the media and the news and through social movements and demonstrations. They are motivated by making a difference, the urgency of the climate crisis, and by being part of a community with others. They are least inspired by politicians and their own workplace.

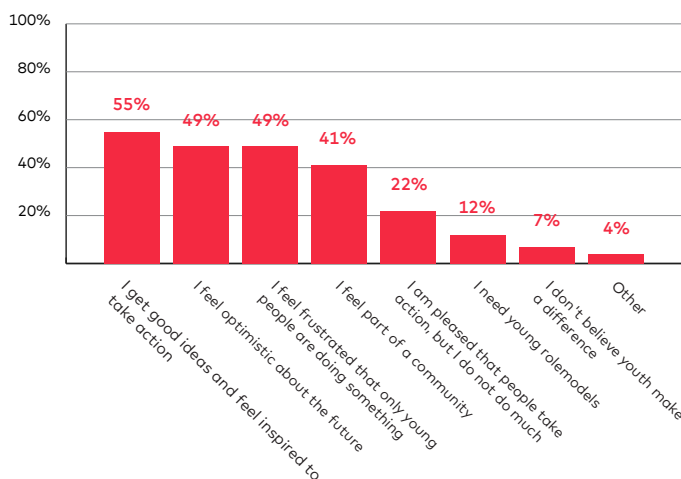
YOUTH INSPIRE YOUTH

Most respondents in the survey state that they get inspiration for sustainable action through friends and other young people (59 %). Nearly half (49 %) report that seeing other young people taking action makes them feel more optimistic, and 55 % state that it inspires them to take action too. Only 7 % feel that young people do not make a difference. Seeing the actions of other young people was also a main source of inspiration for the sustainable changemakers, but 49 % of the survey respondents also express frustration that it is only young people taking action. This implies that they want to see more adult role models taking action. The lack of adult role models is also mentioned by most of the sustainable changemakers. The survey data also shows that 23 % find inspiration in their family, and 12 % say they need more young role models. This also indicates that youth inspire youth, but adults are not currently inspiring young people.

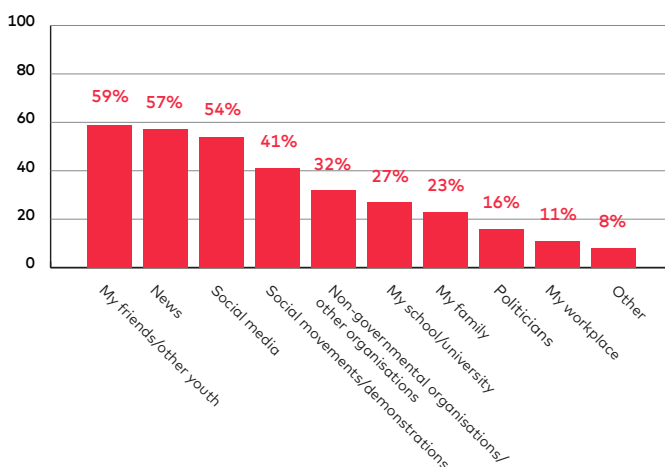
POLITICS AND PROTEST

Almost half of the survey respondents state they are inspired by movements and demonstrations

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU, TO SEE OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?



WHO INSPIRES YOU TO TAKE ACTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?



(41 %), so political protest and activism is still relevant and ongoing in a more digital era. But what is significant is that only 16 % of young people feel inspired by politicians. The lack of inspiration from politicians is only exceeded by lack of inspiration from the workplace (11 %). The latter can be explained by the fact that many young



people do not work or only work part-time while studying. The lack of inspiration from politicians might be explained by young people's ongoing disappointment about the lack of political action towards sustainable consumption and towards reaching the goals set in the Paris Agreement. This is also seen in the thousands of school strikes that have taken place all over the world.¹⁶

MEDIA AND NEWS

The survey shows that some of the biggest inspirations for sustainable action are the news (57 %) and social media (54 %). This is logical, in view of the increasing availability of the internet on mobile devices, and with young people generally spending more time on social media than other age groups. Many of the interviewed sustainable changemakers have a specific memory of seeing

a documentary, reading a book, or watching something on the news about sustainability and climate that triggered their concern and motivation to act. This suggests that social media, news, and other media sources play an important role in inspiring youth to take action.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE NOW

Making a difference, or making the world a better place, is a major source of motivation among the sustainable changemakers. They point out that the increasing sense of urgency to take action before it is too late is another strong motivational factor. The sense of urgency is brought about by increasing concerns, media attention, scientific reports, and documentaries. An interesting point is that most of the interviewed sustainable changemakers state that becoming involved and

¹⁶ <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/05/24/world/global-climate-strike-school-students-protest-climate-change-intl/index.html>



"I would like to see my younger brothers grow up with the same world and nature that I did. That they can live in the world as we know it."

AJA MELGAARD PEDERSEN, 16, Denmark.



"It motivates me to see other young people do something, like Greta Thunberg (...) I feel inspired by the engagement of other young people."

HULDA HOLTVEDT, 20, Norway.



"I want to be a part of the solution and make a real difference. I want to have a job where I can have an impact, and I believe the finance sector plays a crucial part here when it comes to which companies get investment. Storebrand has really integrated sustainability into its overall strategy. This is why I chose this job, but to be honest, if I don't feel I'm having an impact, I will move on."

MARCUS BRUNS, 26, Norway.

taking action has reduced their climate anxiety, so an action-oriented approach might inspire other Nordic youth and help them navigate life with less climate anxiety.

BEING PART OF A COMMUNITY

Four out of ten respondents (41 %) identify feeling part of a community as something that inspires them to take sustainable action. The majority of the young sustainable changemakers also mention being part of a movement, like a youth group, a political party, or other types of communities as a key source of motivation. The sustainable changemakers see the communal aspect as a main benefit of engaging in sustainable activities and living a sustainable lifestyle. They also report that it gives them inspiration and feelings of meaningfulness to be among other like-minded young people who are also fighting climate change. Another source of motivation mentioned by the sustainable changemakers is imagining how climate change might affect their parents, siblings, friends or their own children in the future.

PERSONAL GAINS FROM TAKING ACTION

The sustainable changemakers generally focus on gains rather than losses on their journey towards a sustainable lifestyle. Most of them report greater happiness, feeling part of a community, and feeling better from taking action on their climate anxiety. They also mention health benefits, feeling appreciative, and having a more balanced lifestyle as personal gains. For instance, Tess Waltenburg explains how consuming less and focusing only

on what she really needs makes her appreciate more the products she buys and the things she owns. Otso Sillanauke points out how a zero-waste lifestyle also means less spending, which in turn means less work, less stress, and more free time. Otso also explains how his current lifestyle, compared to his previous one, has less contradictions between how he wants to live (in a sustainable way) and how he actually lives. Lastly, several sustainable changemakers mention feeling healthier from walking or taking the bike rather than driving a car. Overall, they feel that their choices and habits towards a more sustainable lifestyle have also led to a more balanced life with a higher level of well-being.

HIGHLIGHTING THE POSITIVES

The sustainable changemakers do not see sustainable consumption and living as a sacrifice, and prefer to highlight the positive aspects and personal benefits. Highlighting the positive sides of sustainable lifestyles could serve as a counterculture to current habits of consumption, waste, food, and transportation. The sustainable changemakers could be seen as role models, portraying not only how people can live sustainably but also how they can actually lead a better life. By understanding how a sustainable lifestyle can improve quality of life, it becomes clear how young influencers, but also politicians, decision-makers, and businesses, can work on providing more products, services, experiences, policies, and regulations that help promote and/or enforce a more sustainable way of living.



"I don't have as many contradictions in my life anymore. Because my lifestyle and values align (...) I feel like I live according to my own values. I live the way I want to live my life. Before I started to live sustainably, I worked a lot to pay for all of the consuming I was doing."

OTSO SILLANAUKKEE, 25, Finland.



"I get this communal feel out of it. I think it's so important to feel this bond with other young people, and feel you make a difference (...) I get more energy by doing it together."

PENELOPE LEA, 14, Norway.



Barriers and Obstacles

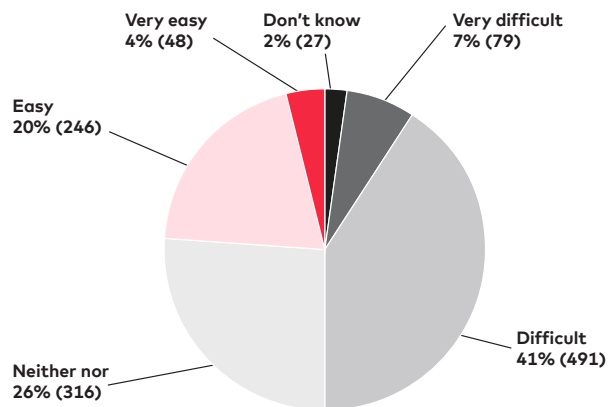
Young people in the Nordic region are motivated and ready to take action, but almost half of the survey respondents find it difficult to live and consume sustainably. Money and information are not the main barriers, and young people argue that sustainable products and choices should be made more available through political reforms, certification, and bans. Another barrier involves changing our norms and values towards sustainable consumption and living.

STRUCTURAL AND POLITICAL BARRIERS

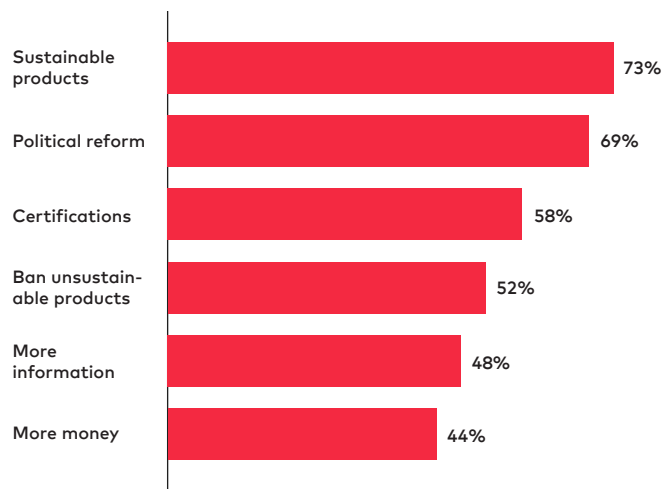
In the survey, 83 % of the respondents state that they are ready to take more action towards living and consuming sustainably, 36 % see themselves as living sustainably, and 4 % say they live very sustainably. However, 48 % find it difficult or very difficult to live and consume in a sustainable way, 26 % answer neither/nor, and just 25 % find it easy or very easy.

Survey respondents state that money (44 %) is not seen as the biggest barrier; young people regard sustainable products (73 %), political reforms (69 %), certifications of products (58 %), and bans on non-sustainable products (52 %) as the main barriers. These are initiatives or suggestions that make it easier and more transparent to make the right sustainable choices. This means that the young people's suggestions are more structural and political in nature. The survey findings align with interview insights from the sustainable changemakers, who make it clear that decision-makers should make green choices easier and remove barriers to consuming and living sustainably.

HOW DIFFICULT OR EASY IS IT TO LIVE SUSTAINABLY?



WHAT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO LIVE AND CONSUME MORE SUSTAINABLY?



DIFFICULTIES IN LIVING SUSTAINABLY

Nearly half the respondents (48 %) feel that more information is needed to live and consume more sustainably. Information and money are often considered key barriers for consumers in changing habits or behaving in a certain way. It is interesting that both these are low on the list

of barriers assessed in the survey. Changing habits and behaviour in a more sustainable way is difficult for the youth group and other age groups.¹⁷ Young people are good at taking action in shifting towards new habits like sorting waste, avoiding food waste, and eating vegetarian food. However, it is important to make it easier to make the transition towards a more sustainable consumption and lifestyle. This could suggest that traditional information campaigns and/or lower prices might not be the key motivating factor for change. For instance, Danish youth, compared to other age groups, are prepared to pay more for a sustainable transition.¹⁸ This suggests that, for the young consumer, it is more important to make it convenient and easy to choose sustainable products and services.¹⁹ This is also seen in the way that the sustainable changemakers found switching to a vegetarian/vegan diet relatively easy, because there are now more alternatives in supermarkets and restaurants. The changemakers also highlight that they think eating vegetarian/vegan food is cheaper and can be healthier.

AIR TRAVEL IS MOST DIFFICULT

Many of the sustainable changemakers mention air travel as the biggest barrier to a sustainable lifestyle, and they have different reasons for feeling that flying is more difficult to give up than other habits. Aida Badeli, for instance, who has been working in the EU parliament, says that taking the train from Sweden to Belgium is too slow and costly. Other changemakers like Elsa María mention the longing to travel and explore exotic countries. Consumption and travel in the Nordic countries, like elsewhere, is linked to values and ideals of the good life. Air travel to far-away exotic destinations, and backpacking in particular, is popular amongst

young people. This makes giving up air travel more difficult, because everyone else is doing it. A survey conducted in 2018 shows that giving up air travel is one of the least common actions towards climate change (16 % percent on average). With the current alternatives to air travel usually being more expensive and more time consuming as well, changing flying habits seems even harder.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Several sustainable changemakers say that the lack of transportation and infrastructure creates a barrier to sustainable transportation choices. Cars or aircraft are often the easiest, cheapest, or only option available. This is especially the case for young people living outside big cities, particularly young people in Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and the more remote regions in the north of Norway, Sweden, and Finland. In recent years, Sweden has made massive investments in rail infrastructure,²⁰ but there is still a long way to go in providing better infrastructure and mobility solutions for greener mobility within and across the Nordic countries.²¹

FAST CONSUMPTION OF FASHION AND ELECTRONICS

The sustainable changemakers say that they struggle with not buying new consumer goods, repairing what is broken, buying less or buying more long-lasting products. Danes have one of the highest consumptions of clothes in the world (16 kg per year).²² Although 48 % of the respondents state that they buy second-hand clothes, and the numbers of people buying second hand is rising in general, the amount of new clothes sold remains high.²³ Electronics is another major barrier

¹⁷ <https://www.sciencedirect-com.ez.statsbiblioteket.dk:12048/science/article/pii/S0272494415300487>

¹⁸ CONCITO, Klimabarometeret 2018

¹⁹ <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ez.statsbiblioteket.dk:12048/doi/epdf/10.1002/sd.394>

²⁰ <https://www.thelocal.se/20190411/reader-voices-how-do-internationals-in-sweden-feel-about-the-growing-anti-flying-campaigns>

²¹ <https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1197618/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

²² <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/1952/full-report.html#heading-8>

²³ <https://www.cbs.dk/cbs-news-da/104/sustainable-fashion-consumption>



to sustainable consumption. Consumption of electronic goods has been rising in recent years in the Nordic countries, especially among young people.²⁴ A recent survey of second-hand shopping in Denmark shows that electronics are the third most popular purchases after home items and fashion.²⁵ With the continuous arrival of new models, electronic products become outdated very quickly and, with repairing often being more expensive than buying a new product, or impossible, consuming electronic goods in a sustainable way remains difficult.

SOCIAL BARRIERS

Social and cultural factors can also be a barrier for living a sustainable life. Living sustainably requires actions and choices that can have consequences

in terms of social relationships, friendships, and family. Several sustainable changemakers state that it can be hard, and sometimes even socially isolating, to be the only one in your circle of friends or family who lives and acts sustainably. One of the sustainable changemakers highlights the difficulty in switching to a vegetarian or vegan diet in a family where meat and dairy products are staples on the table. Other changemakers state that they find it hard to live and consume in a sustainable way without feeling they judge friends and family for not living that way. They emphasise that pointing fingers is not the way forward. To change this, living by their own example and highlighting the positive aspects will help break down social and cultural barriers to sustainable living.

²⁴ <https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:943627/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

²⁵ <https://guide.dba.dk/livsstil/genbrugsindekset-2018>



"I think one of the things I have most trouble with is air travel. I want to go to different places – I think it's a trend here in Iceland (...) I need to reframe my life to stop flying."

ELSA MARÍA GUÐLAUGS DRÍFUDÓTTIR, 24, Iceland.



"I've been fighting this fight for a number of years, and it has sometimes been a very lonely battle (...) it can still be a lonely fight if, for example, your family has not realised the problems."

SOFIE WINGE-PETERSEN, 20, Denmark.



Responsibility and Change

Young people in the Nordic region see individuals, politicians, and companies as responsible for taking action now, but identify politicians and big global companies as most responsible. They are generally disappointed with politicians' lack of action, and are demanding much more ambitious and radical changes.

We have now identified the factors that concern, inspire and motivate young people and sustainable changemakers in the Nordic region, as well as different actions, approaches, and barriers in relation to sustainable consumption and living. Next, we take a look at who or what young people feel are most responsible and what messages they want to send to them. In the final question of the survey, a free-text question, we asked the respondents to say what the most responsible decision-makers should do to act on climate change. We received an overwhelming 929 responses, and these have been analysed for patterns and overall messages. The results are part of the insights in this chapter.

EVERYONE IS RESPONSIBLE

Young people in the survey and the sustainable changemakers agree that we are all responsible when it comes to fighting climate change, and that we must all take action now. There is an urgent need for action from both politicians and businesses, and for ordinary citizens of all ages to push for more action. The sustainable changemakers see simple explanations for the lack of action: politicians do not take action because

they risk losing votes, and the top priority of companies is to make profit. Many businesses will not take action until politicians enforce regulation or consumers demand more sustainable products and services. According to the changemakers everyone is connected and therefore responsible for taking action.

GLOBAL ACTION ON ALL PARAMETERS

Most respondents feel that the world's politicians are the most responsible when it comes to sustainable production and consumption. Big global companies are second, followed by politicians in individual countries. This clearly shows that young people place the main responsibility with global and international politicians and companies. One of the main messages in the free-text responses was that action was needed on all parameters. It is not enough to make political reforms or focus on changing individual habits. The message is clear. The world's politicians and big global businesses must take action on all parameters, including policies, laws, products, services, and investments, to make consumption and production sustainable.

NOT A CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY BUT A CALL FOR ACTION

The sustainable changemakers regard school strikes and protests as a symbol of democracy. The fact that young people can drive the agenda and call for action when needed is a sign that the democratic process works. The sustainable changemakers do not strike and protest because of mistrust in the system, but rather as a sign of disappointment with politicians. Instead of showing mistrust, the sustainable changemakers focus on telling the politicians what to do.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MORE AMBITIOUS

The youth group is more ambitious than other age groups on almost every parameter relating to sustainable transition and action. According to a survey from 2018, 91 % of young people accept that the green transition will cost money in the short term – compared to 67-79 % in other age groups.²⁶ In Denmark, 86 % of young people also think the country should be more ambitious regarding the climate, compared with 62-76 % in other age groups. Perhaps most interesting for this analysis is that 84 % of Danish youth think that politicians should introduce policies that reduce emission through our consumption, compared to 46-64 % in other age groups. This is a significant difference. The survey also shows that the youth group, more so than other age groups, believes more in changing our ways of living than in technology to solve climate change.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

From the youth perspective, politicians have yet to make the necessary changes, so young people have taken on this agenda themselves. The school strikes for climate, climate marches, and various conferences, meetings, as well as the rapid rise of green youth organisations in the Nordic region (such as 'Den Grønne Studenterbevægelse' in Denmark), all show that young people want to see brave politicians prepared to take action. They want politicians to make it easier and cheaper to live and consume more sustainably. They want to show politicians that they are ready for ambitious large-scale changes. The role of young people and young sustainable changemakers serve as inspirations, setting an example and living by it. They also show that living sustainably is not only possible but can be easy and fun, thereby inspiring hope and action for many.

²⁶ CONCITO, Klimabarometeret 2018



"Many kids today have been let down by adults, who don't take any action. I feel let down by the adults, and the ones in power (...) I need a role model, some heroes, who take responsibility and lead. Someone who dares to say what needs to be done. Someone who will lead the way."

PENELOPE LEA, 14, Norway.



"It's obvious that young people have to be the ones to drive the systemic changes, because we can put pressure on the current system."

OLIVER MARTINSEN, 23, Denmark.



Recommendations

The main recommendation from young people and young sustainable changemakers is to take action now. Young people are already buying less, sorting and reducing their waste, eating less meat, and choosing green mobility. But they want to do more, and are therefore telling politicians that the time has come for them to make it easy, as well as the new norm, to live and consume sustainably.

This chapter presents recommendations based on the analysis. The recommendations come from the young people in the survey and the sustainable changemakers, not from the authors of this publication. The first part deals with recommendations for young people and others who want to begin or continue a sustainable transition. These should be seen as tips and suggestions for how to act and live sustainably and how to become a sustainable changemaker. The second part deals with the recommendations, suggestions and demands to the politicians.



Photo: Nordic Council of Ministers

TO YOUNG PEOPLE:

"BECOME A SUSTAINABLE CHANGEMAKER"

The sustainable changemakers are young Nordic people who have taken sustainable action to a higher level than Nordic youth in general. In this section we describe their call to action from other young people.

#1 CHOOSE HOPE AND A POSITIVE APPROACH

Even though the young sustainable changemakers are concerned, and regard the challenge of sustainable transition as monumental, they choose an optimistic outlook. They make an active decision to be hopeful and a determined effort not to think or worry too much. Instead, they remain optimistic and keep a focus on the next positive steps to take.

#2 BELIEVE IN INDIVIDUAL EFFECT

All the sustainable changemakers have a firm belief that every individual can make a difference, but this does not mean that they regard individual actions as more important than bigger political and systematic changes. They do believe that individuals can make a difference, by making small changes at home, as a citizen, employee or a consumer. The belief in change is through many small actions. The sustainable changemakers generally emphasise that both the individual and the system have to change, dramatically and fast.

#3 STEP BY STEP DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable changemakers did not become changemakers overnight. Most of them started at a very young age and have built up their sustainable habits and behaviours over many years. Otso Sillanaukee from Finland explains how he started by taking small steps in a sustainable direction. First, he started sorting his waste, then he started avoiding waste, and finally he began blogging about how to avoid waste. He gave himself the time to learn new habits and explore different actions to take. Then he started to build on that platform over the years. The road to a zero-waste lifestyle, a vegetarian diet, a successful blog, or choosing an impactful career in politics or business is taken step by step.

#4 EXPLORE A MORE SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE

Flying less or not at all, eating vegetarian or vegan food, and repairing things rather than buying new call for a new approach to consumer goods and a new way of living. For the sustainable changemakers, this means a new way to be inquisitive and creative. They explore new destinations and ways to travel, new dishes to cook, they teach themselves skills to repair their own clothes, and produce less waste. At the same time, they are on a journey, exploring their own values and priorities in life.

#5 CHANGE YOUR VALUES GRADUALLY

To make their lives and consumption more sustainable, the change-makers have gradually changed their values. They have gradually shifted from earning a lot of money and consuming material goods towards spending more time with friends, family, and in nature. Several of them mention that they feel relieved, because their life choices and values no longer conflict. As part of the value shift, they have also come to appreciate the communal aspects of being with other like-minded people, who also live a sustainable lifestyle.

#6 ACT – DON'T PREACH

The sustainable changemakers are all characterised by their actions and the everyday efforts they make for a more sustainable future. They are also characterised by a belief that accusing other people or making them feel guilty for not acting or living sustainably is wrong. Instead, they suggest that focusing on your own actions, inspiring others, and praising people who do make an impact will spread positivity and lead to more actions and change.

#7 PUSH FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Sustainable changemakers all agree that pushing for systemic changes in politics is absolutely necessary. Although there is disappointment and lack of belief in current politicians taking action, there is a general belief in democratic institutions. Demonstrations, political campaigning, expressing opinions, voting and blogging are all ways to push for systematic political change.



"Everyone that knows something about climate change, they say there's no hope (...) But I try not to think about it too much, because I don't want to get stuck thinking about it. Maybe it's not going to be that bad if we keep doing the right thing."

ELSA MARÍA GUÐLAUGS DRÍFUDÓTTIR, 24, Iceland.



"It is slow, but you also have to be humble and understand that changing your habits is not easy. We have to talk about it instead of being angry or accusing people, and we have to make it trendy, fun and exciting."

HENRIETTA FLODELL, 25, Sweden.



"Politicians have known about climate change since before I was born. Now we have to use our votes in the elections to demand that we do something. And the ones who are too young to vote have to strike and protest to demand action from the politicians."

HULDA HOLTVEDT, 20, Norway.

TO POLITICIANS:

"YOU MUST TAKE ACTION NOW"

The young sustainable changemakers and the young people responding to the survey believe that politicians have to do something now. Immediate political action is needed to start the transition towards sustainable consumption, fulfil the Paris Agreement and reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. When asked what the politicians should do, the respondents and sustainable changemakers highlight seven initiatives:

#1 LISTEN TO AND INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE

Politicians should actively listen to, respect, and involve young people more. Passivity among politicians shows that they are ignoring the growing concerns. The sustainable changemakers also talk about taking initiatives to encourage more young people to vote and engage in politics. Politicians have known about climate change for a long time. Sustainable changemakers also suggest that the politicians should look for inspiration in the positive climate narrative of the youth movements.

#2 MAKE SUSTAINABLE CHOICES EASIER

Politicians and decision-makers should adopt policies and pass laws to make sustainable choices easy and straightforward for the consumers. They should make it easier and cheaper to buy goods produced in a sustainable or circular way, and ban or make it more difficult to buy single-use consumer items or consumer goods that cannot easily be repaired or recycled. Political reforms should be used to ban, regulate, and tax unsustainable practices, or incentivise the right sustainable choices.

#3 PROMOTE A CULTURAL SHIFT

The sustainable changemakers highlight the importance of a cultural shift in values and mindsets. Politicians and other decision-makers should create initiatives, campaigns, and incentives to make sustainability and sustainable behaviour more accepted and the norm. A cultural shift should focus more on the personal gains of living sustainably rather than the sacrifices made.

#4 INVEST IN A GREEN FUTURE

The sustainable changemakers also highlight the importance of investing in technologies, infrastructure, scientific research, and companies that will lead to more sustainable solutions for energy, mobility, production, and consumption. In particular, the sectors responsible for the highest emissions, such as manufacturing industry, transport, and the building sector, should be specific focal points for more green investments and research.

#5 INTRODUCE CARBON TAXES FOR COMPANIES

The sustainable changemakers also encourage politicians to adopt more laws regulating the large-scale CO₂ emissions. In particular, they call for legislation on carbon taxes for companies, including a law of some kind to regulate carbon emissions, or at least a requirement that the companies should have a sustainability strategy and track their impact on how much carbon they release.

#6 MAKE CLIMATE AS IMPORTANT AS ECONOMICS

According to the sustainable changemakers, sustainability and climate are not prioritised by decision-makers, who instead put economics first. They want to push for a new mindset among politicians and decision-makers, where climate is valued as highly as economics. The message is clear. The most important thing is for politicians to prioritise the climate and the consequences of climate change at the same level as economics. Climate change will come at a massive economic cost, so decisions about climate should be made from the perspective of economics here and now.

#7 INCREASE GLOBAL COOPERATION

The sustainable changemakers view sustainable consumption as both a local and a global problem. They see their actions as part of a bigger global picture. Both the young respondents in the survey and the sustainable changemakers state that the Nordic countries have a historical responsibility and an economic possibility to be frontrunners in securing standards, global cooperation, and regulations for sustainable consumption and production. The Nordic countries cannot solve this issue alone, so changemakers highlight the importance of international cooperation. Countries must work together to achieve sustainable development goals.



"People need to see that a lot of people do it (live sustainably) and that it is not that difficult. We use the #sustainabilityissexy hashtag, because we see this as the next big thing. It's not difficult, you don't need to live in the woods or be a hippy."

AMANDA REJSTRÖM, 28, Finland.



"The most important thing right now is to consider the climate and the consequences as equal to that of economics when we make decisions. Climate change will come at a massive economic cost, and this has already begun. Many decisions are still made solely on the basis of economics here and now."

SOFIE WINGE-PETERSEN, 20, Denmark.



"We need to tax industry. The industry has to pay for their carbon emissions. At the same time, we have to invest in green companies (...) So we need to make companies pay for emissions and give money to those who go green."

AIDA BADELI, 23, Sweden.



Appendix 1:

Survey Demographics

Age of respondents

Median/mean	24/23.02
Min.	13
Max.	30
Total	1211

Gender	Percentage	Number
Girl/woman	72 %	868
Boy/man	28 %	338
Other	0 %	5
Total		1211

Country	Percentage	Number
Denmark	20 %	240
Sweden	12 %	145
Norway	6 %	75
Finland	32 %	385
Iceland	7 %	79
Greenland	3 %	40
Åland	17 %	202
Faroe Islands	3 %	38
Other	1 %	7

Residence	Percentage	Number
Very big city < 1 million citizens	9 %	110
Big city 100,000-1 million citizens	39 %	469
Medium Large city 10,000-100,000 citizens	30 %	359
Small city 1000-10,000 citizens	12 %	149
Small town 200-1000 citizens	5 %	58
Village less than 200 citizens	3 %	30
Don't know	1 %	11
Other	1 %	16
Total		1211

Education	Percentage	Number
Primary school	7 %	82
General upper secondary education	19 %	232
Vocational	4 %	50
Short-cycle higher education	24 %	296
Medium-cycle higher education	25 %	307
Long-cycle higher education	19 %	228
Don't know	0 %	6
Other	1 %	10
Total		1211

Appendix 2:

The 17 Sustainable Changemakers

Kristbjörg Mekkín Helgadóttir

Iceland, 18

Member of the Icelandic Youth Council

Elsa María Guðlaugs Drífudóttir

Iceland, 24

Chairperson in LÍS - Landssamtök íslenskra stúdenta

Sigurður Einarsson Mäntylä

Iceland, 17

Member of the Icelandic Youth Council

Rasmus Erichsen

Denmark, 19

Founder of the organisation Stop Spild Lokalt

Oliver Martinsen

Denmark, 23

Founder of the company RenSti

Aja Melgaard Pedersen

Denmark, 16

Climate activist

Sofie Winge-Petersen

Denmark, 20

Founder of Earthpreneurs. Member of the Danish Youth Climate Council

Gaute Eiterjord

Norway, 23

Leader of the organisation Natur & Ungdom

Hulda Holtvedt

Norway, 20

Spokesperson Grønn Ungdom

Marcus Bruns

Norway, 26

Nordic Head of Sustainability at Storebrand & Co-founder, former CEO at YSI

Penelope Lea

Norway, 14

Climate activist

Tess Waltenburg

Sweden, 26

Sustainable influencer and blogger at tesswaltenburg.com

Aida Badeli

Sweden, 23

Spokeswoman Grön Ungdom

Henrietta Flodell

Sweden, 25

Former Swedish Youth Delegate to the United Nations

Otso Sillanaukee

Finland, 25

Author and influencer about sustainability at Nollahukka

Amanda Rejström

Finland, 28

Founder of Spark Sustainability

Julia Degerth

Finland, 25

Author and Zero-waste influencer at Grön i Åbo





Nordic Council of Ministers
Nordens Hus
Ved Stranden 18
DK-1061 Copenhagen K
www.norden.org

Nordic Youth As Sustainable Changemakers

IN THE TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

All over the world young people are protesting for action on climate change and sustainable consumption. In the Nordic countries, the youth are leading the way as sustainable changemakers with ambitious, radical, and urgent demands to politicians and decision-makers to take action now. This analysis looks at youth in the Nordic countries, aged 13-30, and their concerns, motivation, inspiration, actions, approaches, recommendations, and demands in relation to SDG12 on Sustainable Consumption and Production.