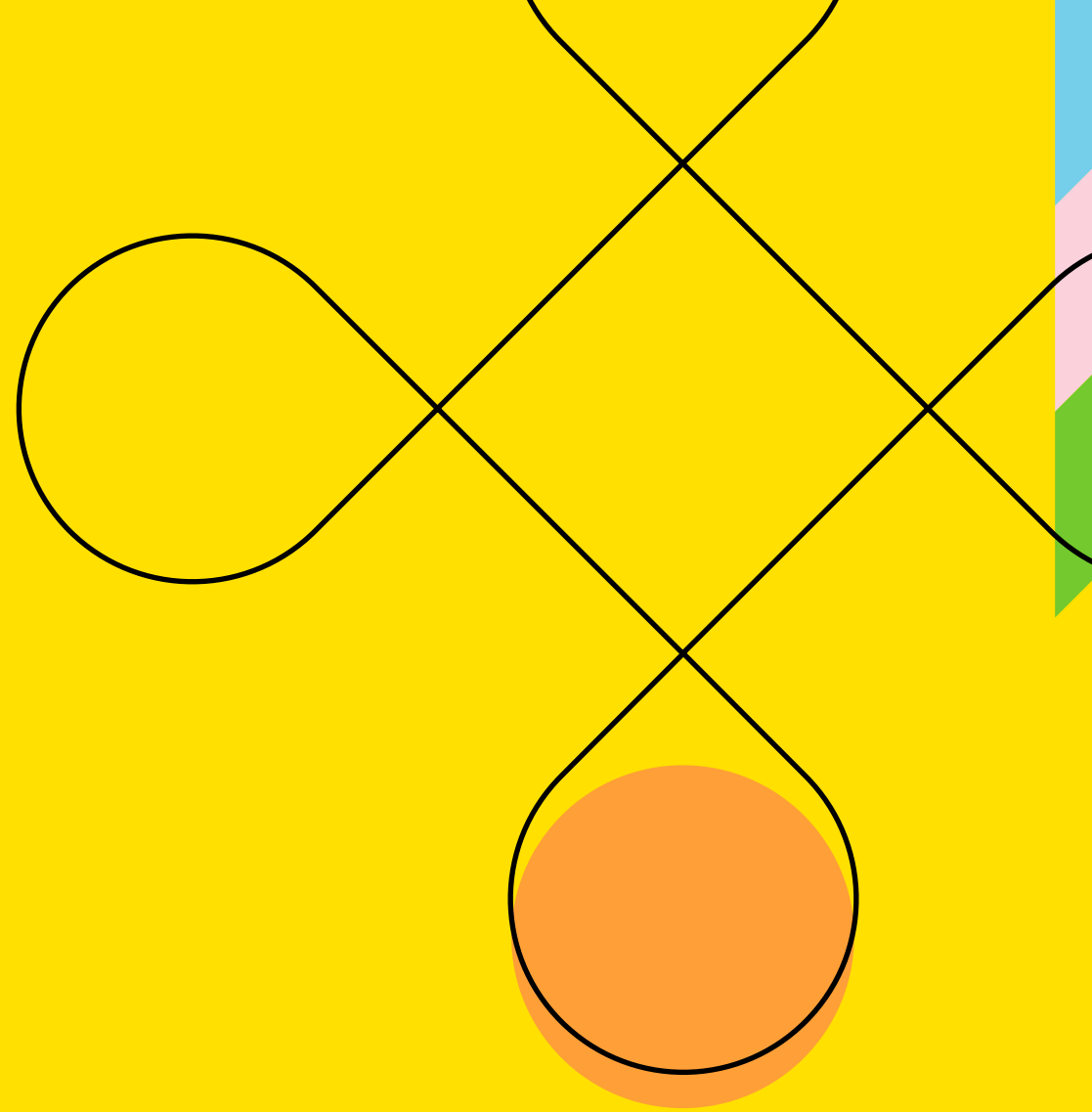


# ENGAGE WITH STORY- TELLING

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# IN THIS SECTION

How do I harness the attention of many people? How do I make sure that my message is understood so that I do not unintentionally exclude part of audience? How do I make use of different types of media? How do I increase my visibility and engage people to act?

All previous modules have described processes of starting to create change in your region. However, catalysing the change is not only about what you do, but also about how you do it. In this section we provide concrete examples of how we have got our message through, or, in our words, successfully engaged the public through storytelling.

We want to share our best tips on how to approach both traditional and social media with your stories, how to engage relevant stakeholders and, perhaps most importantly, how to communicate your work and what we all can do to harness climate change while also living our best and most fulfilling lives.

Take your time with this module as there are many questions only you can answer with your local insight. Gather your team to work on the answers to these questions together and draw up a communications plan.



# POSITIVE STORYTELLING

Dystopian talk about an ecological crisis is so discouraging it can easily distance us from taking action. Discover the power of positive storytelling by not dwelling on the problem but aiming for action. Describe the desired end-state – what does sustainable everyday life look like?



# THE POWER OF POSITIVE STORYTELLING

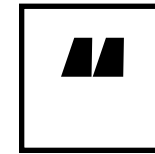
**L**et's face it, complex dystopian talk about an ecological crisis is so discouraging it could easily distance us from taking any action. For some it is too much to handle, while others are simply not interested at all. What we need is solution-oriented discussion, concrete steps and encouragement to act and accelerate the shift. That is why we have put an emphasis on how we are to present our story.

**Wording determines a major part** of how your audience receives your message and most importantly how big your audience will be. You do not want to exclude a big part of your audience as a result of using jargon and challenging

words. If you can say something in simple terms, then do so. Do not unnecessarily complicate your language.

**And try not to reinvent the wheel.** Often the sustainable option is nothing new, but something we have merely forgotten in the world of ever-expanding variety of choice. Keep the motivation profiles in mind when you are preparing your messages.

**Describe the desired end-state** – what does sustainable everyday life look like? What are we aspiring to become? Say your vision out loud and clear. You can be science-based in a human-centred way. Do not get stuck with details – focus on the simple foundations of sustainable everyday life.

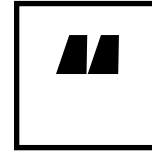


*Say your vision out loud and clear. You can be science-based in a human-centred way. Do not get stuck with details.*



**There are also a few principles that can help, no matter where you are located, to structure your message.**

- ✔ Clear text structure enables easy reading and catches the reader's eye. Make use of bullet points, lists and subtitles.
- ✔ Remember that you do not have to sum up everything you want to say in one post. Divide your output into smaller bits and sharpen the main message.
- ✔ Create a bit of we-spirit and personality! Address the reader. You can raise questions your reader can ponder and use as their gambit later.
- ✔ Leave numbers and explicit facts to graphs and tables. Describe how big an impact you are talking about; for example, if you are referring to greenhouse gas emissions, leave out any mention of gigatonnes or megatonnes.
- ✔ Give concrete examples for people to understand the scale in question – “one year's worth of daily car driving” makes much more sense than “3 tonnes CO2 equivalent”.



*Address the person. You can raise questions your reader can ponder and use as their gambit later. Leave numbers and explicit facts to graphs and tables.*



# NUTSHELL EXAMPLE OF POSITIVE STORYTELLING

**S**ustainable everyday life has a few simple foundations. It is about actions and rethinking our behaviour. We recommend you adopt a few clear rules of thumb instead of concentrating separately on every single step or product, whether they are the most ecological options or not. Instead of stressing about the plastic and packing waste you could not avoid or about leaving the tote bag at home, prioritise those actions that have the biggest ecological impact. It turns out that it is the content of the bag that matters the most – if you have tote bag full of meat and dairy products then it is a big contribution to the footprint. You cannot go too wrong if you adopt the sustainable everyday life framework as your

mindset. Here are some priority actions that have the biggest impact on your footprint.

- 1. Add a portion of vegetables** to your meals, for the sake of your health as well.
- 2. Move as much as possible** with your muscles and/or with public transport.
- 3. Buy only what you need** or see if you can find items that you can loan or lease or that are used.
- 4. Be conscious of your energy usage.** You can take it as a mindfulness exercise that also saves you money! Remember that warm water is energy too.
- 5. Try new sustainable ways and discuss your experiments** with your neighbours and friends. Have an honest discussion about what worked and what did not.

- 6. And always remember to vote in elections** for the representative that fights for enabling more sustainable choices in your region.

**When you start** choosing more sustainable options, you are also creating and enhancing new positive norms. Now think about how your actions might be scaled up. Keep your sustainability spectacles on when at work as well. What can you do in your work role, or in your other positions of responsibility, perhaps in your hobby club? Your potential to encourage change goes beyond you, and we are here to support you in fulfilling that potential.



## DO

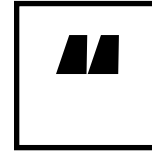


- ✔ Emphasise solutions
- ✔ Draw on the evidence base but aim for action
- ✔ Spark curiosity
- ✔ Use common terms instead of jargon
- ✔ Remind people about positive hand-prints and how everyone has a role to play in accelerating the shift!

## DON'T



- ⊗ Dwell on the problem
- ⊗ Drown your audience in numbers and facts
- ⊗ Preach how you must do this or that, or shame people 'how dare you!'
- ⊗ Stay on an abstract level
- ⊗ Go from one extreme to another; avoid outdated green / eco-communication



*Emphasise solutions, spark curiosity, use common terms people can understand and aim for action. Remember not to dwell on the problem or drown your audience with numbers and facts.*



# MEDIA TIPS

## KEEP YOUR WORK TRANSPARENT

Your team could become best friends with journalists. When the dystopian visions dominate the headlines, we all are thirsty for some good news. You can stand out by highlighting solutions instead of problems.

Show everyone your cornucopia of solutions for a sustainable everyday life, displaying and promoting your work on your website and social media. Stories need faces, so show the great team behind all that action. Inform the media that these people are ready and willing to give comments and be interviewed.

## PREPARE YOUR KEY MESSAGES

Save time by preparing some general answers and key messages that suit different occasions and media contacts. It will also be useful to collect all answers and statements in a file from where you can draw content when working to a tight schedule.

## DO NOT FEED THE TROLLS

Do not allow yourself to be provoked by negative feedback and stay focused on your work. There has always been and there always will be someone who does not agree with you. We have shared some of the most frequently asked questions from the past three years to help you. You can find these in our material bank.

## GATHER PEOPLE TOGETHER

Once in a while it is best to gather inspiring people together and share what has been learned – what have you been doing and where are you going next? Or whenever you have some results from your projects, host an event and brief relevant stakeholders and the media. Also make use of existing and upcoming seminars and webinars. ●





# SOCIAL MEDIA

**T**oday, it's easier than ever to connect with people but at the same time it has never been this hard to get noticed. The most efficient way of getting your message through to a large group of people is to **use already existing structures**, clusters and trends instead of trying to create new ones from scratch.

**Instead of trying to create** your own social media cluster or group, try to take advantage of already existing groups or trending hashtags. Creating a group that solely focuses on sustainability will only reach the usual suspects who are already interested and invested in these issues. Be creative and partner with local bloggers, YouTubers and social media groups with different backgrounds.

**Instead of creating a new set** of campaigns or awareness days, make use of the current theme days and holidays that are already shared on social media. These do not have to have anything to do with sustainability or environmental issues. **Plan your yearly calendar** of social media engagements and prepare your messages in advance. This will be your compass throughout the year, and it keeps you focused on the big picture. Of course, sometimes it is just best to go with the flow.

**Use messages that are easy to relate** to and that people can share with their peers. Remember the golden rule that often one picture is worth a thousand words. Try to choose pictures that **illustrate the actions or daily practices** instead of the traditional sustainability imagery of polar bears and recycling icons. There are plenty of good photobanks, but also consider if your

team could photograph their own daily struggles or successes.

**Encourage people to participate** in discussion rather than passively share the information you offer. Think about your social media audience as your **partners in dialogue**.

**There are no limits** to the information mass that can be shared on different platforms each day, each hour or each minute, so you must set your own limits. Accept the fact that **you cannot be everywhere at once, so you need to prioritise** how, when and where to stay in touch. ●



# GO TO PEOPLE

# M

ost importantly, remember that often the most memorable discussions are not the ones had in the digital world or that the number of likes is not

the best measure for your impact. Nothing beats meeting in person and having a chat one to one.

**Go out there with your team** and your tools. Attend local fairs and festivals, and do not limit your attendance to environmentally themed events. For example, work out how you could connect the festivities with other motives driving sustainable choices. Think about where you could be present in order to address completely new audiences.

## **Take your time, be present and listen.**

There is no better way to learn what people actually think about sustainable lifestyles and what keeps them from fulfilling their potential as change makers. ●



# OTHER STAKEHOLDER PROJECTS

**View this list** for inspiration on how you could reach other audiences than the usual suspects.

- [Sustainability in sports teams](#)
- [Learning materials for all school grades](#)
- [Carbon footprint calculator for organisations](#)
- [Housing cooperatives](#)
- [Call out for the creatives](#)
- [Team up with the gaming industry](#)



# CHECKLIST



## CHOOSE YOUR WORDS

Create your own vocabulary of the kinds of phrases, allegories and tones of voice that resonate with people.



## CREATE YOUR KEY MESSAGES AND ASSETS

Plan a few short catchphrases or slogans you can attach to your message on different occasions. Put together a folder of photos and pictures you can share. You can start with our media bank.



## CHOOSE YOUR PLATFORMS

Find out what media platforms different target groups use and choose where to focus on.



## CREATE YOUR CALENDAR

Find out what the most relevant holidays and theme days are in your region. Plan a few well-timed engagements per month.



## CREATE A MEDIA CONTACT LIST

Who are the most important media and stakeholder contacts for you in your region?

Educate the media representatives to understand the topic.



## GATHER TOGETHER A STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT GROUP

Create your own stakeholder peer support group and nominate contact people to stay in touch with your partners.



## HOST A LAUNCH EVENT

Host an event and brief attendees on your goals and ways of working in the upcoming years.



## GO TO PEOPLE

Spreading the joy of sustainable lifestyles is not about pouring information from ivory towers. It is about encountering people.



# AVAILABLE RESOURCES



## **MEDIA KIT (DROPBOX)**

Here you can download all brand elements and other useful material such as presentations. ➔ Request from contact person.



## **GREDI**

Images and pictures for free use.  
➔ Request from contact person.



## **COMMUNICATIONS CALENDAR EXAMPLE**

If you want to see an example of how to conduct a 365 communications plan, look no further.  
➔ Request from contact person.



## **FAQ**

➔ Request from contact person.

## **CONTACTS**

Specialist, Finland  
Salla Nurminen, Sitra  
➔ [shift1o5@sitra.fi](mailto:shift1o5@sitra.fi)

