

Una Europa Virtual Exchanges for Sustainability (UnaVEx)

Sustainability Action task

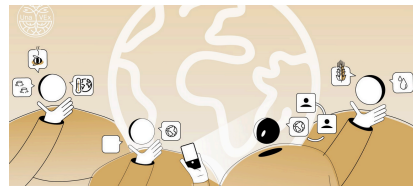


What is a "Sustainability Action"?

A Sustainability Action is a collaborative project where you try out a concrete sustainability action for the duration of UnaVEx Virtual Exchange. In your small group, you reflect on the action from the perspectives of ecological, social, economic and cultural sustainability and you will also discuss the action with your group members from the perspectives of their local contexts.

The Sustainability Action is an opportunity to:

- Try out what sustainability means in practice
 - Learn about different aspects of sustainability
 - Learn about international and intercultural perspectives
 - Apply what you've learned in the UnaVEx program
 - Collaborate across countries and disciplines
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Key Elements

1. Choose a Sustainability Action for your group

Focus on a specific Sustainability issue

Develop a clear and meaningful topic that you can research and reflect on critically.

Examples:

- Water scarcity
- Circular economy in electronics
- Food insecurity and sustainable diets
- Greenwashing in climate communication

Choose an action you will conduct during the duration of UnaVEx Virtual Exchange. Every group member commits to the same task, and you will reflect on it together in the coming weeks. Take this as a challenge - if you cannot commit to the task some week, this is a good opportunity for reflection. It is possible that some of the following examples are already part of some group member's daily practices. In this case, you may choose several actions to conduct and reflect on in your group. The idea of the Sustainability Action task is that every group member makes an effort to commit to the actions.

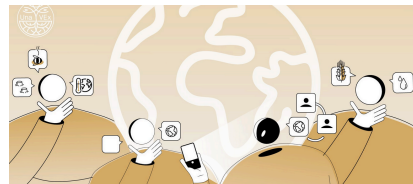
Choose one or more of the following examples:

CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

- Talk about sustainability to 10 different people during the UnaVEx weeks (your neighbours, friends, grandparents...).
- Organise a fun activity to introduce sustainability to fellow students, such as a quiz.
- Visit a sustainability-related cultural event (theatre, movie, gallery) or read a book on sustainability.
- Find a sustainability related piece of news every week to share with your group.
- Make one social media post per week about sustainability.

WATER

- Calculate how much fresh water you use every day.
- Inform yourself about the water-saving measures on your own campus and think of a fun way to communicate this.



- Use the tap water at campus. Use a reusable water bottle for drinking. Encourage others to do the same.
- Determine to what extent tap water is promoted as a primary beverage and make taps more visible.

ENERGY

- If your campus building has elevators, proactively encourage people to use the stairs instead of the elevator (with stickers, posters, ...).
- Save energy: switch off electronic devices and lights for nights and when not in use. Encourage fellow students to switch off lights, equipment, and heating or airconditioning after use or when leaving the room or office.

PURCHASES

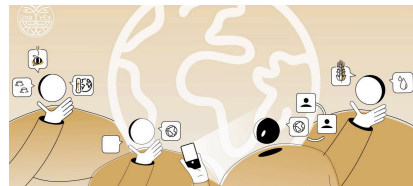
- Reduced consumption: Do not buy anything that is not absolutely mandatory.
- Many products are overpackaged by suppliers. As customers, we have a good opportunity to encourage suppliers to reduce packaging waste instead of simply accepting it.
- Try to reduce usage of plastic and do not buy anything plastic.

WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

- Take a photo of all garbage you produce (one photo/week).
- Do a 15 minutes plogging/garbage walk per week and pick up garbage along your route. Take a photo of your "catch" to share with your group.
- Promote the use of reusable cups for hot drinks, food, etc.
- Explore how to prevent paper waste.
- Share or swap clothes with fellow students.
- Repair something old.

MOBILITY

- Take public transport, the bike or walk to your campus. If it's not safe alone, go with a group.
- Share your car, bike, ...



WELLBEING AND FOOD

- Try a vegetarian or vegan diet. Calculate the change of your carbon footprint.
- Encourage fellow students to exercise more. They provide information about the risks of sedentary work. For example, organize an afternoon walk with a sustainable approach for fellow students. You can also participate in the 10,000 steps challenge or a similar campaign with fellow students.
- Provide a healthy alternative for treats and encourage people to eat healthily and make better choices.
- Check if there's a varied, wholesome vegetarian menu on campus. If not, consider how you can promote it on campus.

BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN SPACE/CAMPUS MANAGEMENT

- Communicate the importance of biodiversity to fellow students and what you can do as an individual.
- Walk in four different neighbourhoods with fellow students and count how many different species (plants, animals) you can find. Take photos to share with your group.
- Explore opportunities at campus, like installing an insect hotel or installing birdhouses.
- Discuss with policymakers and fellow students on your campus how green space management can be made more environmentally friendly. For instance composting, planting native plants, etc.

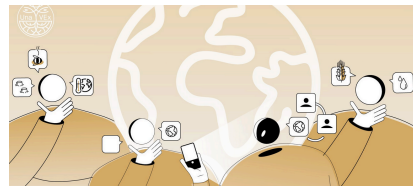
Or your group can come up with your own action!

Agree on the implementation “rules” among your group, for instance everyone takes a picture, counts plants, reports of their weekly consumption ...

2. Reflect on your experiences in the group meetings

In every group meeting, you are asked to discuss your progress with the action and reflect on it. Since UnaVEx groups are international, explore how your chosen task:

- Appears or is addressed in each member's local context
- Is shaped by global systems or structures (e.g., trade, policy, media)
- Reflects different aspects of sustainability (ecological, social, economic, cultural)



You can also discuss:

- Did you face any challenges or barriers in your daily context when trying to implement this action?
- What similarities and differences do you notice across group members' experiences?
- How do you perceive the individual vs. collective impact of your action?
- Do you see ways your action could scale up or influence others in your community?

This intercultural perspective is essential—use it to compare, contrast, and learn from each other.

You will use a Miro board to make notes about these reflections.

Here you find an example of the Miro board: <https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVJHwljzg=/>

Every group will receive their own version of this Miro board.

Outside of the group meetings

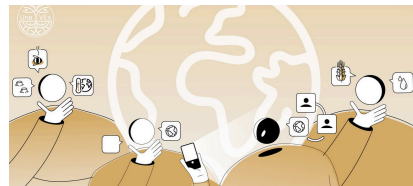
You'll have 5 official group sessions during the UnaVEx program and you need to invest an additional 10 hours extra to plan and develop your action.

You're encouraged to:

- Collaborate asynchronously outside of sessions if needed
- Pilot your idea locally (e.g., test a survey or share your podcast with peers)
- Present your output in your home university, online, or in local networks

3. Summarizing your action

At the end of the UnaVEx Virtual Exchange, you shall summarize the outcomes of your group's weekly reflections of your Sustainability Action. Your group is asked to present them on a Miro board that is shared with everyone participating in the UnaVEx Virtual Exchange.



4. Reporting your action

At the end of the UnaVEx Virtual Exchange, you will submit an individual written report (1-2 pages) documenting your Sustainability Action.

Your report should include:

- Title, your name, group number and team members
- Your role in the action
- Chosen sustainability task and how you implemented it
- Reflection on ecological, social, economic and cultural aspects of it
- How you combined global and local perspectives
- Main challenges and what you learned
- Photos and/or inks to your output (if applicable)

The report should be written clearly and concisely in English. You may include images, quotes, or visual elements where appropriate.

EXTRA (not mandatory): Create a communication product

Produce a final output that showcases your analysis, ideas, or engagement. Choose a format that fits your group's strengths, interests, and intended audience. Make sure that your project/action is feasible. Do not overestimate your time and capacity! The different institutions can help you with dissemination of your actions.

Examples:

Format	Description
Blog post	A well-structured article (600–1,000 words) with visuals or infographics
Podcast/audio	A 30 min recorded discussion, interview, or reflection <i>Example</i> KU Leuven Green talks
Short video	A 5–10 min explainer, docu-clip, or digital story
Interactive poster	A digital or printable poster with QR codes linking to resources
Mini-lecture	A recorded or live presentation for peers or a university event