

GREEN CAREER EDUCATION



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ABOUT

GREEN CAREER EDUCATION

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GREEN CAREER EDUCATION

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Once upon a time, in a small café...

A lively group sat around a large table, talking with passion. A man sat down at the next table to them with a coffee reading the news. At one point, when the debate grew particularly heated, he looked up and spoke...



Peter: "Excuse me... I don't mean to interrupt, but I heard you mention something called **Green Career Education**. What's that?"

Authors: "Oh, sure. We're addressing the concept of **Green Career Education**, and we're going to write a book about it. Are you interested in that topic?"

"**Green Career Education**... I've been teaching for years, and I've never heard of it. Is it a subject?"

"Not exactly. It's actually an approach to education. It connects learning with life. It helps students see that their future work isn't only about earning money but also about making a difference. Do you talk to your students about what the world of work looks like?"

"I see. But isn't that the role of a school career counsellor?"

"Absolutely. The counsellor plays an important role once a student starts deciding on a specific school or other concrete choices. But really, every teacher talks at some point about what the world looks like beyond the school walls, right?"



"Yes, almost every day, actually. Of course, I don't only deal with exams... and the students always ask why they must learn certain things. But I don't tell them what kind of job they should do, my students are still too young for that."

"That's so true. Students don't need to have a career decided at an early age. In today's rapidly changing world of work, that's simply not possible. And more importantly, it doesn't help them. What you can do with young students is open their eyes to possibilities, for example, by talking about how knowledge is used in everyday life, by putting information into a real-world context, or by asking for their opinions on new inventions. In doing so, you help them broaden their horizons and that's no small thing."

"Well, I try... but honestly, my students are worried. They read about climate change, crises, wars. Some of them say, 'What's the point of studying if everything's falling apart?' I don't always know what to say."

"That's exactly why **Green Career Education** exists. It helps students see that every profession, every field, can become part of the solution. It turns fear into curiosity and curiosity into action."

"So it's not just about green jobs like wind turbines or solar panels?"

"No. It's about greening all kinds of work. A builder who chooses sustainable materials, a journalist who writes about local change, a teacher who opens space for reflection and hope, every small step counts."

"Hmm. That sounds like a lot of responsibility."

"It is. But it's also an opportunity. When teachers talk about how learning connects with the world, they plant seeds that grow into confidence, purpose, and care. That's how education changes the future, quietly, lesson by lesson."

"In this book, we'd like to show how teachers can bring that idea to life. We'll explore how **Green, Career, and Education** can be connected. Together, they form the foundation of a more sustainable and meaningful approach to learning."

"Sounds interesting. I might need another coffee for that."



Dear Readers,

did this book come into your hands by chance? Or have you been eagerly awaiting it? Either way, you are now opening it, and we invite you on an adventurous journey called Green Career Education. We want to show you where and why this adventure began, and most importantly, how you can make it useful, whether you are a teacher, a student, or just someone interested in the future of education.

This journey is not predetermined by us. We are creating it together, and what it will look like depends on everyone who joins in. That's why we invited **Peter, a teacher**, to join us for the introductory meeting in a café. He'll appear throughout the book and contribute his perspective from his teaching experience. You'll also hear from **Hummingbird**, a small but persistent companion, whose comments will appear later on in the margins of the book. Let's get to know her.

Hummingbird: *"I'm just an ordinary bird, and I stumbled into this book by accident. I'd rather be looking after my nest, but they cut down the tree I liked so much. And, as I'm looking for a new place, I'm seeing a lot of strange things. I can't help commenting on everything."*

*"Sometimes I wonder why people do what they do. They invent amazing things, but also destroy what they need most. They talk about change all the time, but who is really changing whom? **Do people change because the world changes, or does the world change because of people?**"*



Peter: *"Things change, I can confirm that. But who's responsible for it? I don't have an answer to that... What do you think?"*

Authors: *"That's exactly what this book explores. Maybe not the whole world, but certainly the **world of work**. Because through work, people shape reality every day."*

"So, what are we looking for here?"

"Answers to the following three questions:

- 1. Where did Green Career Education come from?*
- 2. How do jobs come into being?*
- 3. And why must they be green?"*

"I knew it—the answer to everything is green!"



“Yes, but let’s take it one step at a time. Those three questions are the backbone of this book. They lead us through its three parts:

Part I. Green – Living and Teaching in Times of Change

Why the world needs teachers who can guide students through complexity and inspire action.

Part II. Career – Learning from the Past

How history shows that every crisis gives rise to new kinds of work and new hope.

Part III. Education – Teaching for Tomorrow

How schools can help young people turn concern into competence and green careers that make a difference.”

“Let’s start with the first one—what does it mean to live and teach in times of change?”



GREEN

LIVING AND TEACHING IN TIMES OF CHANGE





We are living in a time of rapid and profound transformation.

The news reminds us daily that our world is facing unprecedented challenges: rising global temperatures, more frequent floods and droughts, loss of biodiversity, polluted rivers and oceans, growing inequalities, even the spread of misinformation that weakens trust in science and institutions. These challenges are not far away—they affect our daily lives. They shape what food we eat, how healthy we are, what kind of work we can do and what future our children will inherit.

For many young people, these realities create feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. They are asking questions about the future that do not have easy answers: *Will there still be jobs for us? Will we be able to live safely on this planet? Will our work matter?* Teachers are among the first to hear these questions in the classroom.



Peter: *“My students sometimes say: Why should we even try? In a few years the planet won’t be able to sustain humanity anyway. And honestly, I don’t always know what to tell them.”*

Authors: *“You don’t need to have perfect answers. What matters is that you listen, acknowledge their worries, and help them see that within these challenges lies a new opportunity.”*

“I don’t get it... are you saying there’s actually something positive hiding in all those disasters around us?”

Today’s global crises are already giving rise to new types of work—**green careers**. These are professions that aim not only to provide a livelihood but also to repair, protect, and transform the world we live in. A renewable energy technician helps reduce carbon emissions. A conservation biologist works to save endangered species. A journalist reporting on climate solutions changes the public conversation.



“But isn’t that just for a few enlightened specialists? What about students who want to follow in their parents’ footsteps, or take the jobs they see around them every day?”

*“That’s exactly the point. Green careers are not limited to brand-new professions. Even familiar jobs can be reimagined with a green perspective. A hairdresser can choose natural products. A gardener can create a sustainable school garden. A social worker can help vulnerable families adapt to climate change. Each of these careers is **part of the solution.**”*

GREEN CAREER EDUCATION

This is where Green Career Education comes in. It is an approach to education that helps students connect learning with life. It shows them that their future work is not only about making a living but also about making a difference. Green Career Education encourages creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving. It empowers students to imagine careers that contribute to sustainability, whether in new green sectors, in traditional jobs done differently or in entrepreneurial projects that balance profit with social and environmental responsibility.

Green Career Education gives students the confidence to see themselves as part of the solution. It helps them imagine not just *what job* they might do, but how that job can contribute to a healthier planet and a fairer society. And because sustainability affects every field, a green career can take many different forms.

So, what exactly does a **green career** mean in practice?

- > **A green job**—a role directly within the green sector, such as a solar panel installer or a green building architect.
- > **A greening job**—a traditional job that is adapting to sustainable practices, such as a hairdresser who uses natural, non-toxic products.
- > **A sustainable business**—an enterprise that balances economic goals with environmental care and social responsibility, such as a fashion brand that reduces waste and supports fair trade.



Every teacher has a role in this. By encouraging creativity, broadening horizons and showing students how challenges can become opportunities, you help them connect learning with real life. It is not about adding another subject, it is about weaving sustainability into what you already do.



SUSTAINABILITY —MORE THAN A BUZZWORD

Today, we know that without clear measures towards sustainability, we cannot ensure the long-term well-being of people on this planet. Therefore, sustainability is not an optional trend but a key condition for a dignified life for future generations.

National Geographic gives us a simple but powerful definition:

“Sustainability is the practice of using natural resources responsibly today, so they are available for future generations tomorrow.”

Peter: *“That sounds nice, but isn’t sustainability just about protecting nature?”*

Authors: *“Not at all. Sustainability is much broader. It is a synthesis of three interlinked dimensions: **environmental, social and economic**. They constantly influence one another—and only when they are in balance can we talk about real sustainability.”*

Three Pillars of Sustainability



https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Three-Pillars-of-Sustainability-University-of-Michigan-Sustainability-Assessment_fig2_274312357

In practice, this means that **sustainable approaches** do more than protect forests or rivers, they also:

- > **improve quality of life** by creating healthier living environments;
- > **promote social equality and education**, ensuring opportunities are not limited to a privileged few;
- > **strengthen resilience** against crises such as pandemics or energy shortages; and
- > **support long-term economic savings and innovation**, as fair and eco-friendly solutions often open new markets.

So, not just planting trees, but also making sure people can still afford bread?

A sustainable idea should always combine three features: it should be fair, it should have a positive impact on the environment and it should remain economically viable.

From a sustainability perspective, the world of work plays a decisive role. It matters how we green our professions today and how we introduce these opportunities to young people who are still choosing their direction. And here is where a new set of abilities known as green skills comes in.



Green skills are the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to develop and support a resource-efficient society. They include technical expertise, like understanding renewable energy, a circular economy or energy efficiency, but also transferable skills such as creativity, adaptability, problem-solving and teamwork. Together, these skills help people design solutions that both protect the planet and create meaningful jobs.



Peter: *“But I’m not a scientist. I’m just a teacher. Isn’t this too much to expect of me?”*

Authors: *“Not at all. You already shape how young people see the world. It’s not about having all the answers or adding another subject to an already crowded curriculum. It’s about connecting your subject with real life and encouraging curiosity. That alone makes a powerful difference.*

As a teacher, you can help them think about their place in the world of work differently. Instead of only asking “What jobs are available?” you can also ask them, “What are you good at, and how can your talent contribute to a sustainable future?”

Through your teaching, students begin to understand that their choices matter. They see that every career path can contribute to a fairer and greener future. They learn that even in the face of global challenges, they are not powerless. This is the essence of Green Career Education. Our book will guide you further on this journey. It will show you how to bring sustainability into your classroom, how to inspire students with examples of green careers, and how to empower them to face challenges with creativity and hope. The future is being shaped in our schools today, and teachers are at the very heart of that change.

FACING TODAY’S GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The next step on our journey is to look outward—to the world our students are growing into. It is a world facing a series of profound challenges, many of which are tightly interconnected, shaping our daily lives and the opportunities available to the next generation. Green careers that focus on sustainability, renewable energy, conservation, and environmental protection play a crucial role in addressing these issues. Through them, individuals are not only building livelihoods but also contributing to the repair and protection of our shared planet.

If all roads lead to Rome, why can’t all career choices lead to a sustainable future?



Despite the difficulty and complexity of this topic, we would like to maintain an optimistic approach and hope that each of us can contribute, within our profession, to improving the situation and successfully addressing current challenges.

To frame these challenges, we draw on the World Economic Forum’s **Global Risks Report 2025**, created with the input of nine hundred experts worldwide. The report identifies five categories of risk: **economic, environmental, geopolitical, societal, and technological**. For the purposes of this book, we’ll focus on those challenges that are most visible in Europe today—issues that students already see and feel in their daily lives. By linking them with careers, we can show how education prepares young people not only to cope with these challenges but to become part of the solution.

Climate Change – The Challenge Behind Many Others

Among all global challenges, climate change is the one we hear about most often. And for good reason. It is not only about rising global temperatures—it brings with it more frequent storms, torrential rains, long periods of drought, devastating wildfires, rising sea levels and the collapse of fragile ecosystems. At its root lies the burning of fossil fuels, which releases greenhouse gases and disrupts the balance of our planet’s climate.

Climate change is not a single-issue problem. It is a complex, interdisciplinary challenge that connects directly to many others—environmental, social, and technological. That is why the Global Risks Report 2025 places climate change at the center of its analysis, showing how its effects ripple outward like circles on water.

For the purposes of this book, we will not try to cover every global consequence. Instead, we will zoom in on **seven selected sub-challenges** that are particularly relevant for young people in Europe today. They are challenges students can already see, feel, and sometimes even fear in their own lives.



Challenges? Alright, bring it on! Just please, no math problems, I’m better at nectar than numbers.

Seven challenges? That’s almost one for each day of the week!





Peter: “So... why do these global challenges feel like such a giant mess?”

Authors: “Because they are a giant mess. Everything’s connected. Climate change fuels biodiversity loss, which worsens pollution, which ties back to how we live and work. You can’t just patch one leak and sail on. It takes teamwork, smart technology, big shifts in how society thinks, and everyday sustainable habits. It’s a marathon, not a sprint – though sometimes it feels like we’re running both at once.”

“That sounds exhausting. Please tell me there’s some good news?”

“Plenty. Every challenge is like a locked door, but behind each one is a room full of opportunities – new ideas, better ways of working. And we can open those doors faster if we work together across borders, professions, and classrooms. The jobs we choose, and how we do them, really do shape the world. It’s not just about inventing shiny new “green” jobs—it’s also about giving familiar jobs a green twist.”

7 Challenges

Environmental	Societal	Technological
Extreme Weather Events	Poverty and Inequality	Misinformation and Disinformation
Biodiversity Loss and Ecosystem Collapse	Decline in Health and Well-being	
Natural Resource Shortages		
Pollution		

The younger generation is especially sensitive to these issues. They notice the changing weather patterns—storms one month, droughts the next. They hear about species disappearing or see polluted rivers in their own regions. They worry about how inequality or health crises might shape their futures.



Peter: “It feels like every week there’s another crisis in the news—storms, fires, floods... How can teachers keep up with all this and still make it meaningful for students?”



Authors: “We don’t need to compete with the news cycle. What matters is helping young people connect what they see around them with the bigger picture—and showing them that even the hardest problems can be tackled step by step.”

The question for us as educators is clear: **how can we encourage and guide young people to face these challenges without losing hope?**

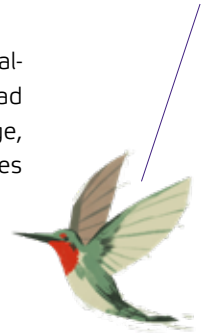
In the following sections, we will explore these seven sub-challenges in more depth. For each, we will look not only at the problem itself but also at how *green careers*, whether new professions, reimagined traditional jobs, or sustainable businesses, can turn despair into agency and open pathways toward solutions.

Environmental Challenges: Extreme Weather Events

Each of us is witnessing changes in the weather—year-round droughts alternate with heavy rains and strong storms that cause floods or help spread destructive fires. Weather changes are a manifestation of climate change, which is primarily a result of human activities that release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.



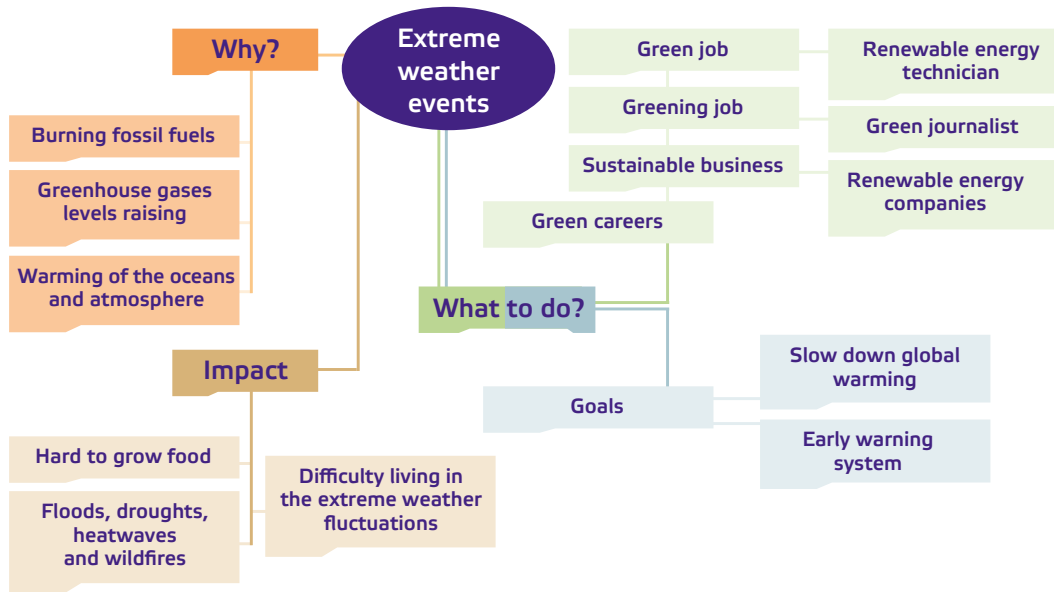
The weather’s not for small talk anymore, it’s got bigger things to say.



Reality check

Even in Europe, these events have led to significant loss of life, extensive property damage, and major disruptions to ecosystems and agriculture. Recent examples include devastating floods in Central Europe in September 2024, a record-breaking heatwave and wildfire season in Greece and Turkey in July 2025, and the destruction of large areas of forest in the first half of 2025 due to wildfires.

This simplified mind map helps us better understand why weather fluctuations occur, how they affect our lives on different levels, and how green careers can provide meaningful responses.



Take, for example, the role of a **renewable energy technician**. By installing solar panels, maintaining wind turbines, or repairing geothermal systems, these specialists directly help reduce the global carbon footprint. Their work is practical, visible, and essential for limiting the extreme weather fluctuations we increasingly experience.

Yet this career is about more than just technical know-how. It requires a blend of expertise and soft skills: designing energy systems, analyzing data, understanding sustainable technologies, managing projects, adapting to changing regulations, and communicating solutions clearly. In other words, it is a career where science meets teamwork and innovation.

Green jobs like this have a significant impact. But it is important to remember that the solutions to today's challenges do not lie only in creating entirely new professions. Just as vital is the ability **to green existing jobs**—to reimagine traditional roles through a sustainable lens (i.e. a **greening job**).

Consider the work of a **green journalist**. By investigating issues such as deforestation, water pollution, or species extinction and by making the consequences of human activity visible to the public, journalists raise awareness and spark change. They show how even long-established professions can become powerful drivers of sustainability.



Environmental Challenges: Biodiversity Loss and Ecosystem Collapse

Biodiversity encompasses the variety of life on Earth at all levels, including ecosystems, species, and genes.

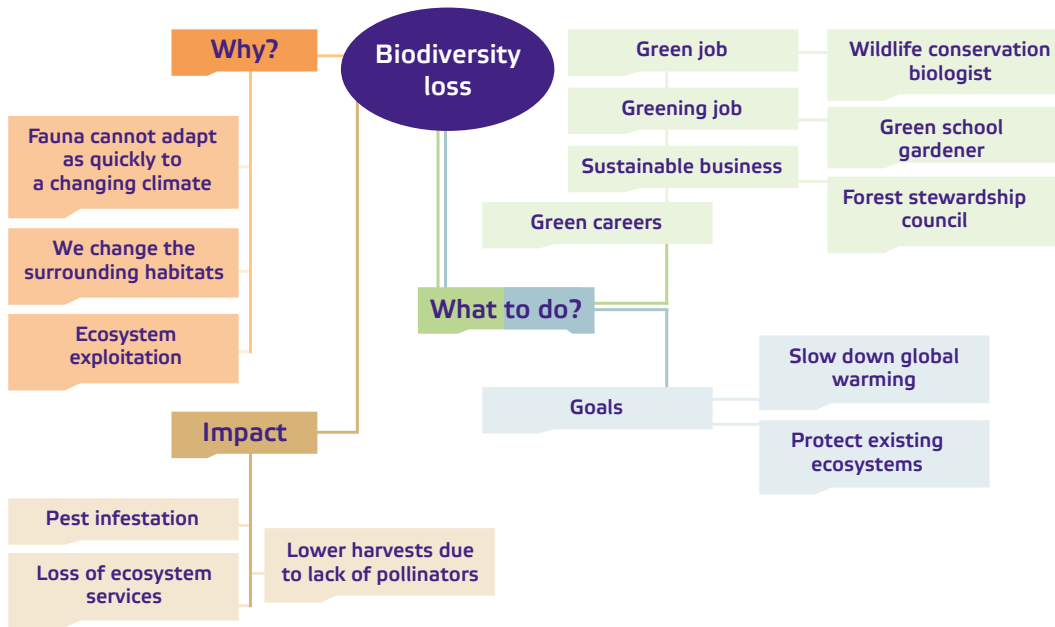
Like climate change, manifested by sudden weather fluctuations, biodiversity loss is a huge and similarly complex challenge. The destruction of habitats, pollution, and climate change are driving species to extinction at an alarming rate. Biodiversity loss undermines ecosystems and disrupts food chains.



Reality check

A clear example of biodiversity loss in Europe is the sharp decline of farmland birds. Intensive farming reduces insects and seeds, disrupting the food web these birds depend on. As they disappear, so does their natural role in controlling pests. Without them, pest populations can grow, damaging crops and threatening food production.





Biodiversity is crucial to our lives, so let's look at what careers we can use to support and preserve it.

Green Job: Wildlife Conservation Biologist

Studies and protects endangered species, restores habitats, and develops management plans for wildlife protection. This role requires a mix of scientific knowledge, practical skills, and interpersonal abilities: strong biological and ecological understanding, research and analytical skills, effective communication, problem-solving, and adaptability to challenging field conditions.



Greening Job: Green School Gardener

Manages and cultivates school gardens, applying sustainable agricultural practices and turning the school grounds into a living classroom.



Sustainable business: The Forest Stewardship Council is an international organization that promotes responsible forest management. It certifies wood, paper, and other forest products harvested in ways that protect biodiversity, respect the rights of local communities, and ensure long-term forest health.

Environmental Challenges: Natural Resources Shortages

The overuse of natural resources—through deforestation, overfishing, and the depletion of freshwater reserves—puts enormous pressure on the planet's ecosystems. The need for sustainable resource management is more urgent than ever. We all rely on them every single day: in the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the appliances we use. This means that each of us can play a role in saving and using resources more responsibly.



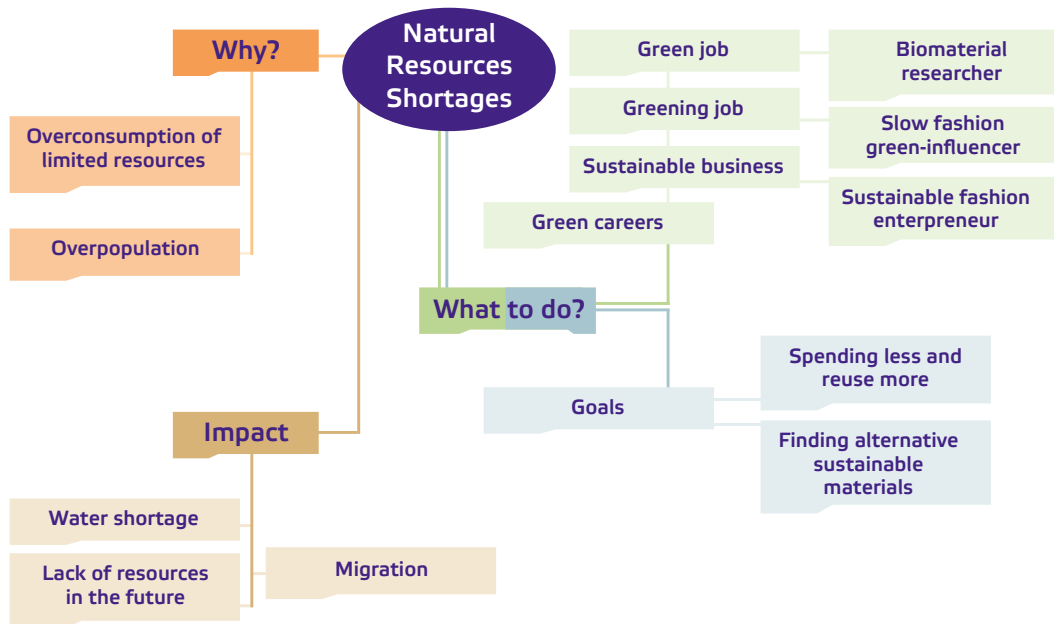
Interesting fact

Can you guess how many liters of water are needed to produce one pair of jeans?

- a) 57 liters
- b) 1,350 liters
- c) 3,800 liters

The correct answer is shocking. Nearly 3,800 liters of water are needed for just one pair of jeans. Fashion, as we can see, takes a heavy toll on the environment. The textile industry is responsible for around 20% of global water pollution. It is also linked to human rights abuses, unfair working conditions, and even child labor.

The response to this unsustainable system of so-called fast fashion has been the rise of sustainable or slow fashion movements. These movements aim to reduce environmental damage, respect human rights, and promote more responsible consumption.



How can careers contribute to solving this problem? By rethinking roles within the fashion industry—designers using eco-friendly materials, entrepreneurs building fair trade businesses, journalists exposing harmful practices, or teachers encouraging students to reflect on consumer choices.

A good example is the role of the **slow fashion green influencer**. Instead of promoting endless new trends, they use their platforms to inspire sustainable, ethical and eco-conscious fashion choices. They advocate for mindful consumption, highlight quality over quantity and encourage their audiences to make informed decisions that benefit both society and the environment.

This role requires a blend of creativity, digital expertise, and interpersonal skills. Successful influencers need to understand the basics of sustainable fashion and textile production, communicate complex ideas in a clear and engaging way, and build trust with their audiences. They combine storytelling with data, use social media strategically and adapt quickly to new online platforms and trends. At the same time, they rely on empathy, collaboration and critical thinking to connect with communities and inspire real change.

Another strong example is a **sustainable fashion entrepreneur**. Instead of producing cheap garments designed to be worn a few times and then discarded, they create clothing that is durable, timeless, and environmentally responsible. They might work with organic cotton, recycled fibers, or innovative materials such as mushroom leather or pineapple fibers. Their businesses often follow circular principles—repairing or recycling garments, reducing waste, and ensuring fair working conditions across the supply chain.



Guess what? You can actually study sustainable fashion at top European universities! They teach not only eco-friendly design and waste reduction, but also how to make clothes from mushrooms or pineapples.

Environmental Challenges: Pollution

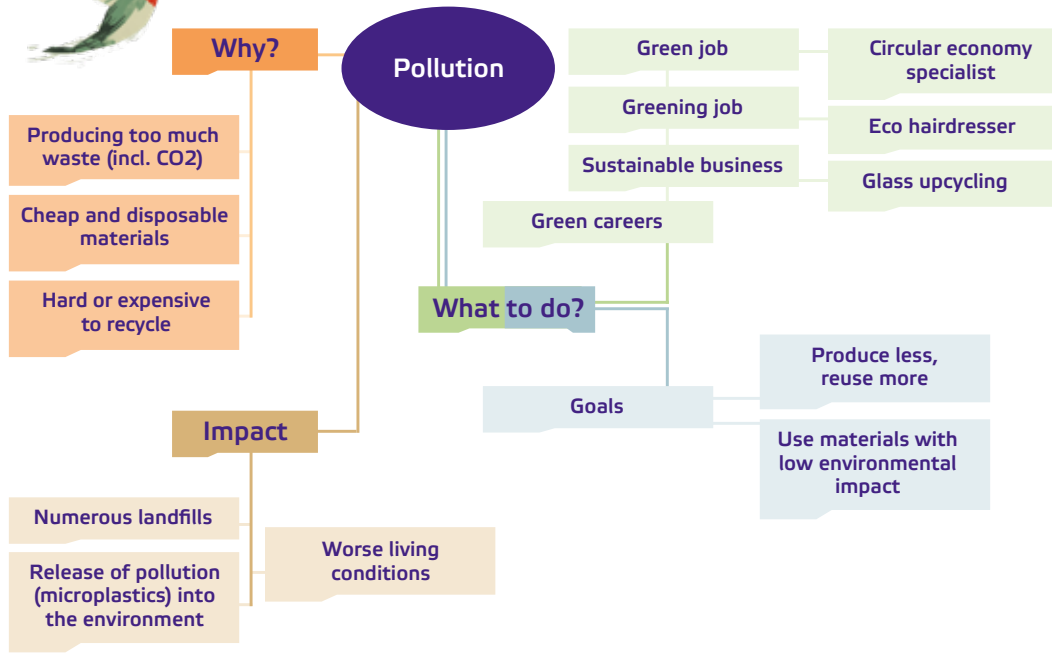
Pollution is one of the most visible threats to our planet. Plastic waste clogs rivers and oceans, chemical residues seep into soils, and air pollution harms not only ecosystems but also human health. Landfills are overflowing, and toxins are finding their way into our food chains. Pollution is not a distant issue, it affects the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the overall well-being of our communities.



So, it's not just the fish eating plastic anymore?

Reality check

Even in Europe, microplastics are now found almost everywhere. Tiny plastic fibers from synthetic clothes and residues from personal care products have been detected in lakes such as Lake Garda, river sediment, even table salt. Pollution that once seemed invisible has entered our daily lives, right onto our plates.



The three "R"s rule applies here: reduce, reuse, recycle.

How can careers help us respond to this challenge? One example is the work of a **circular economy consultant**. These specialists advise businesses on how to minimize waste and pollution by redesigning products, reducing material use, and creating systems for recycling and reuse. Their approach is based on the **circular economy**, a model that contrasts with the traditional "take-make-dispose" system of production. Instead of ending up in landfills, materials are kept in circulation—shared, repaired, refurbished, and recycled—so that their value is preserved and waste is minimized.



Peter: "A consultant? That sounds a bit distant from everyday life. My students might ask whether someone in an office really changes anything in the real world".

Authors: "That's a fair question. Circular economy experts often work behind the scenes, but their impact is huge. They redesign systems so that less waste is created in the first place. And to show that it's not only about consultants, even familiar jobs can be reimagined with a greener perspective. Take a hairdresser, for example. By using natural products and recyclable packaging, they reduce pollution every single day."

An **eco hairdresser** helps reduce pollution by replacing chemical-heavy shampoos and dyes with plant-based, biodegradable alternatives that don't contaminate rivers or groundwater. Instead of single-use plastics, they choose recyclable or refillable packaging, adopt water-saving washing systems, and energy-efficient tools. In this way, a regular haircut becomes part of the solution, showing clients that everyday services can protect both people's health and the environment.



See? Your everyday choices, like which shampoo or face cream to buy, can support healthier ecosystems and more ethical businesses.

Local producers of natural cosmetics show that beauty products don't have to harm the planet. By using regional ingredients, avoiding harmful chemicals and offering recyclable or refillable packaging, they reduce both chemical and plastic pollution. Their products are often made in small batches, under fair working conditions and with transparent supply chains.



Interesting fact
Want to know what's really hiding in your shampoo? Point your phone at it with the free GreenScan app – and don't be surprised if your "strawberry shower gel" is more chemistry set than fruit salad!



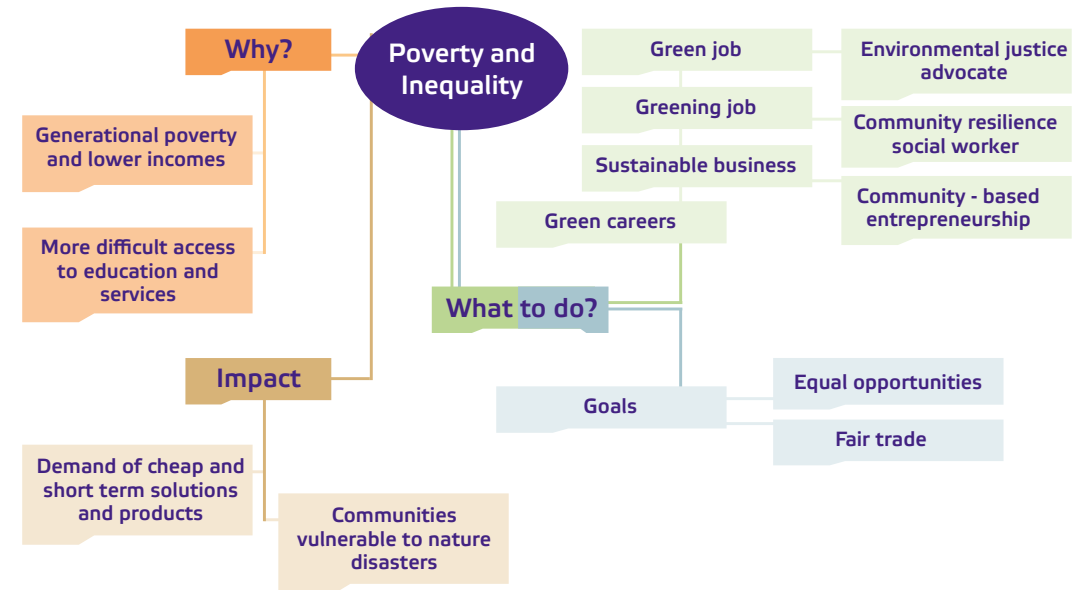
Societal Challenges: Poverty and Inequality

Inequality, both social and economic, is deepening worldwide. **The Global Risks Report 2025** warns not only about rising inequality but also about polarization in society, involuntary migration and the erosion of human rights and civic freedoms. Vulnerable communities are hit hardest by environmental degradation and climate change. And these are not just distant problems from the Global South, they also affect parts of Europe.



Reality check

In southern and eastern Europe, poorer communities are more exposed to environmental hazards and extreme heat. Many families live in poorly insulated buildings or outdated apartments that are difficult and expensive to heat or cool. Because they cannot afford energy-efficient windows, proper insulation, or modern appliances, they often rely on old coal stoves or electric heaters that consume large amounts of power. This not only raises their energy bills but also increases pollution and health risks. When heat waves strike, these households are less able to stay safe; when prices rise, they have few alternatives. Poverty and climate vulnerability feed into each other, creating a difficult cycle to break.



How can careers respond to this? Green careers can support social justice by creating opportunities in marginalized communities, launching community-based environmental projects, or building sustainable businesses that empower people and improve quality of life.

Peter: "That sounds ambitious. Do you really think a job can fix inequality? Isn't that just politics?"

Authors: "Politics matters, but so do professions. An **environmental justice advocate**, for instance, works to protect vulnerable and marginalized groups from environmental harm. They focus on ensuring equal protection from pollution, climate change, and resource depletion – so that low-income and minority communities are not left to carry the heaviest burdens alone."



The younger generation already has role models who prove this is possible. Greta Thunberg, once a teenager striking outside her school, is now a global climate leader whose voice mobilized not only the public but also scientists and politicians. Her story shows how sincere commitment, even starting small, can ripple outward and inspire systemic change.



Greta Thunberg is a Swedish climate activist known for founding the “Fridays for Future” movement, also known as the School Strike for Climate. She has gained international attention for her advocacy work, demanding urgent action on climate change and holding world leaders accountable. Greta has received several notable awards for her climate activism, including the Right Livelihood Award (also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize) and Amnesty International’s Ambassador of Conscience Award in 2019.

Of course, not everyone can be an activist. But everyone can contribute through their career choices and daily behavior. Even traditional professions can take on a green dimension. A **community resilience social worker**, for example, supports families at risk of poverty who are also vulnerable to floods, heat waves, or storms. By understanding the impacts of climate change, social workers can provide better advice, resources, and advocacy to help these communities adapt and build safer lives.



Social Challenges: Decline in Health and Well-being

In recent years, global health has faced a complex mix of challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic left lasting scars, and we now see rising rates of non-communicable diseases, the persistence of infectious illnesses, and a worrying mental health crisis—especially among young people. Added to this are the health impacts of climate change and pollution, which make the situation even more urgent.

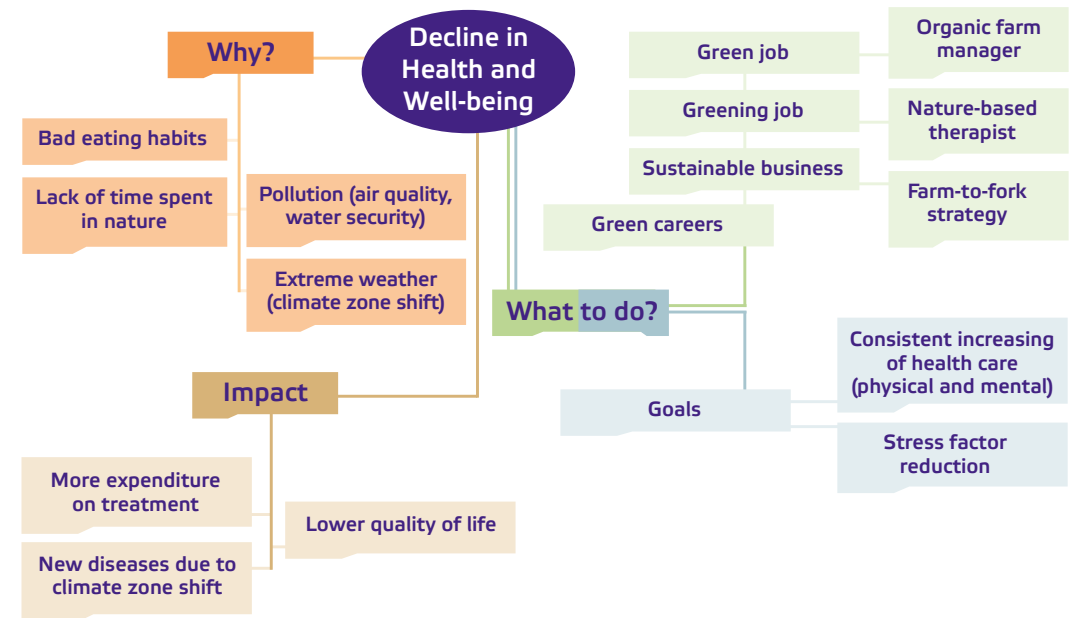
Reality check

One striking example of how climate change affects health in Europe is the sharp rise in heat-related deaths and the spread of diseases such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus. The European Environment Agency has documented a clear link between rising temperatures—like those during the 2022 heatwave—and excess mortality, especially among older populations. At the same time, shifting climates create conditions where new pathogens can thrive, leading to outbreaks of illnesses such as chikungunya and dengue, which were once considered tropical diseases.



Peter: “Health problems, mental illness, climate impacts... This feels like everything at once. Isn’t this too broad for us to tackle through careers?”

Authors: “It is complex, yes—but that doesn’t mean we are powerless. Every profession can touch health and well-being in some way, from how we produce food to how we design our cities or shape our classrooms.”



A good example of a green career that connects directly to health is the work of an **organic farm manager**. These professionals run farms without synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, or genetically modified organisms. By focusing on soil fertility, crop diversity, and animal welfare, they reduce environmental damage while producing healthier food.



Peter: *“But honestly, how is any of this supposed to link to teaching? I can’t exactly turn my classroom into a farm or a therapy garden.”*

Authors: *“You don’t have to. Even simple, hands-on experiences can make a big difference.”*

“Like what?”

“Fieldwork, outdoor projects, or direct contact with nature. These help students see how learning connects to real life—even to future careers.”

“So, more than just theory?”

“Exactly. Take sustainable farming, for example. Students can visit a local organic farm, talk to the farmers, or start a small school garden. Suddenly, biology, chemistry, or geography aren’t just subjects – they become tools for solving real problems.”

Food, of course, is not only about how we grow it but also how we prepare it. Anne-Marie Bonneau, known as the *Zero-Waste Chef*, promotes cooking from scratch, using every part of an ingredient and reducing packaging waste. Her motto is well known: **“We don’t need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions doing it imperfectly.”**



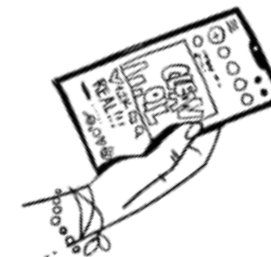
The health crisis is not only physical but also mental. Doctors and psychologists have long warned about the rise in mental illness, especially among children and teenagers. Here, greening jobs play a role as well. **A nature-based therapist** uses the natural environment as part of the treatment—through wilderness walks, gardening, or horticultural therapy.



Technological Challenges: Misinformation and Disinformation

According to the **Global Risks Report 2025**, misinformation and disinformation rank among the most serious global threats. False stories and manipulated content spread rapidly through media networks, shaping public opinion, eroding trust in facts, and undermining democratic institutions. With the rise of artificial intelligence, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between AI-generated and human-created content. Technology, instead of uniting us, often deepens divisions and fuels societal polarization.

Fresh food, fresh air, green spaces... Maybe health isn't just about medicine after all.



Reality check

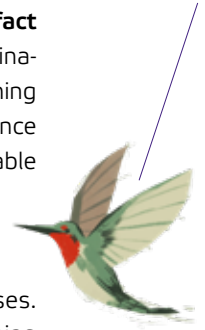
Disinformation campaigns targeting **wind energy** have appeared in several European countries, most notably in Germany, where false claims about the negative impacts of wind turbines have circulated widely on social media. These stories often mix half-truths with emotional language, creating fear and resistance in local communities.

Typical examples include claims that wind turbines cause health problems such as sleep disorders, that they are responsible for the decline of insect populations, or that they are economically unviable and secretly subsidized by corrupt politicians. In reality, there is no scientific evidence that low-frequency sounds from turbines affect human health, and studies show that the impact on insects and birds is minimal when turbines are properly sited.

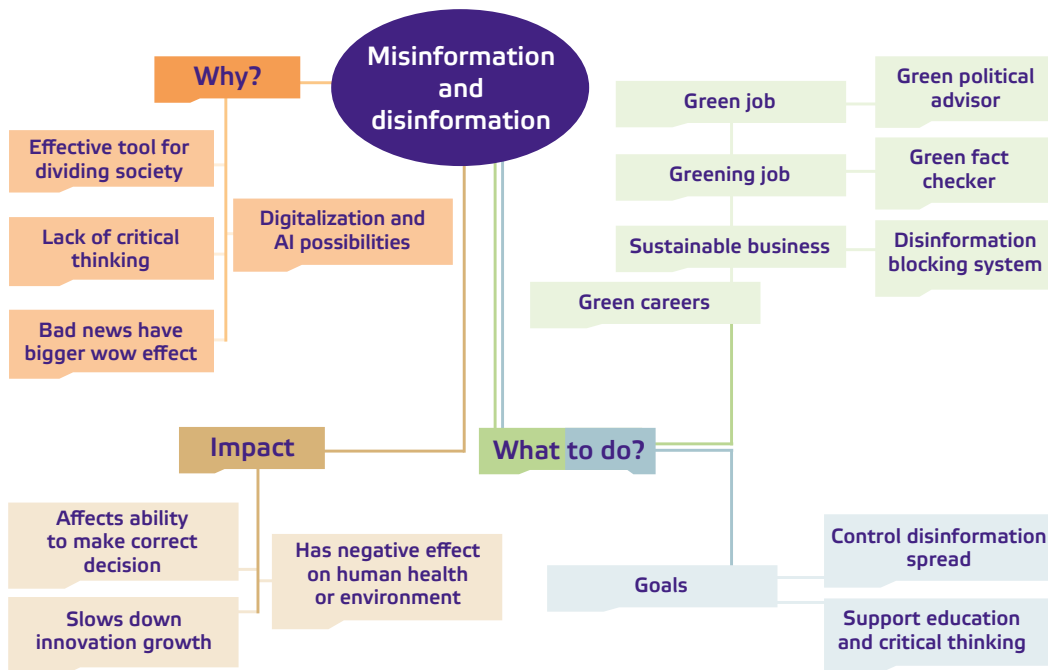
Misinformation like this shows how easily public perception can be shaped—and how quickly it can hinder real progress. False narratives about wind energy, electric mobility, or urban sustainability projects create confusion and skepticism just when societies need clear, science-based solutions.

This is where **green careers** play a key role. By creating visible, practical examples of change, they help counter misinformation and demonstrate that sustainable solutions truly work. One such profession is the **green fact checker**. These specialists verify claims about environmental and sustainability issues, cross-check sources, and ensure that the information reaching the public is accurate and trustworthy. Their work helps rebuild confidence in facts and encourages informed debate—whether concerning renewable energy, green cities, or electric mobility.

Sometimes the truth doesn't go viral, but it doesn't make it any less true.



Education and public awareness are our strongest long-term defenses. **Digital literacy should therefore be a natural part of education**, helping young people critically assess information and recognize manipulation.



FROM GLOBAL PROBLEMS TO GREEN SOLUTIONS: THE ROLE OF CAREERS

Throughout this chapter, we've seen that green careers are not a niche trend but concrete answers to the global challenges we face. Let's bring the picture together:

Innovation and Technology

Green careers push the boundaries of what is possible. Engineers design solar panels and wind turbines, technicians build electric vehicle infrastructure, and scientists experiment with new ways to recycle materials or store energy. These innovations make the shift to clean energy and efficient systems real.

Collaboration and Policy

Many careers thrive on collaboration – between governments, companies, schools, and non-profits. Experts provide data for climate agreements, cities implement sustainable transport systems, and businesses adopt fair trade models. Green careers connect people across sectors and speed up change at both policy and practical levels.

Sustainable Practices Across Sectors

Sustainability is no longer confined to the environmental field. It is transforming finance, fashion, manufacturing, and even healthcare. Bankers develop green investments, designers create clothing from recycled fibers, and industries cut water and energy consumption. Green careers weave sustainability into the fabric of the global economy.

Education and Advocacy

Equally important are the careers that educate and inspire. Teachers link classroom knowledge to real-world examples, journalists fact-check environmental claims and advocates show that every voice matters. Through these roles, awareness grows, and individuals are empowered to act.

In short, **green careers reflect today's global challenges and, at the same time, provide solutions.** They innovate, collaborate, transform industries, and inspire societies. All of this requires **green skills: observation, creativity, critical thinking, patience, and teamwork.** These skills are useful in any job and equip people to respond to complexity while also influencing those around them in positive ways. It may start with small steps, but multiplied across professions, these steps build the foundation for a future that is both sustainable and fair.

You're learning to do what nature has always done—create, adapt, and share.





Peter: *“So, if I understand it right, green education isn’t really about teaching ecology. It’s about helping students see that their choices matter?”*

Authors: *“Exactly. It’s about showing that every lesson connects to life and that through what they learn and how they work, they can help shape a fairer, more sustainable world.”*

“That actually makes sense. But, has it always been like this? Have people always used their work to solve big problems?”

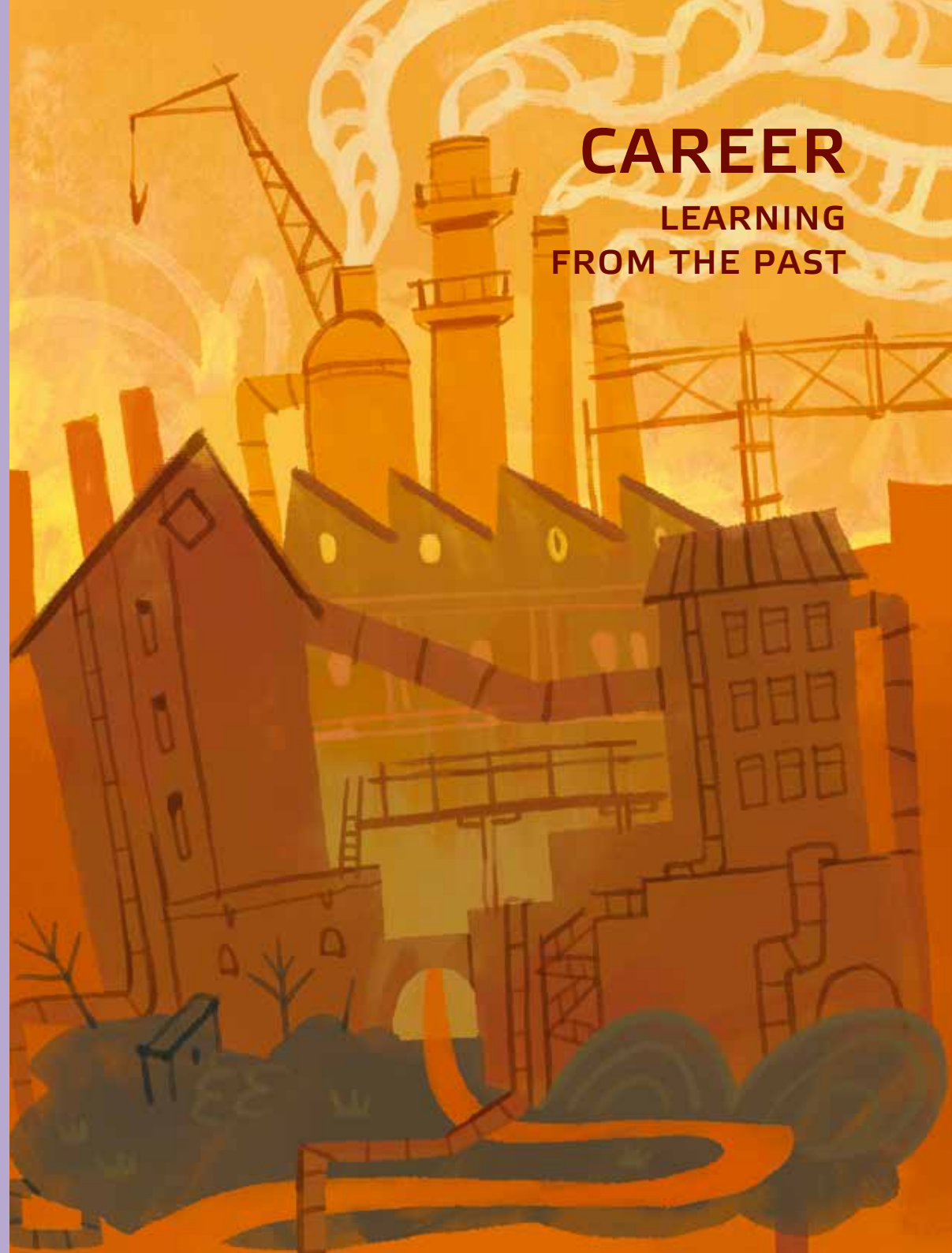
“Yes. Every generation has faced its own challenges—industrial revolutions, wars, economic shifts – and each time, new professions emerged to meet society’s needs. Work has always been one of the ways we fix what’s broken.”

“So, what you are saying is that green careers aren’t something new after all, they’re just the next chapter in the same story.”

“Exactly. Green isn’t an ideology, it’s a continuation of how humanity learns to survive change. And that’s where our story goes next. Let’s take a step back in time to see how people before us turned challenges into opportunities and how new professions were born to move the world forward.”



CAREER LEARNING FROM THE PAST





Before we look ahead, let's take a step back in time. History shows us how every big challenge created new needs—and how new jobs and professions appeared to meet them. In times of crisis, work has never been just a way to earn a living. It has been a way to rebuild, to restore balance, and to create meaning.

As we explore the past, we will see that today's "green" and "sustainable" careers are not an invention of our time. They are the latest chapter in a long tradition of using work to make life better—for ourselves, for others, and for the planet we share.

So, come with us and let's step back in time to a period of rapid change—the **rise of the industrial era**, a time of great innovation but also one of hardship, inequality, and struggle.

LATE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBANIZATION (1850–1914)

Picture this ...

A thick, grey fog settles over the city as the morning rush begins. Smoke rises from tall chimneys, and the air smells of coal. The streets are alive with movement—men in dirty coats hurry to factories, women carry baskets of bread, and children weave through the crowds. Some head to school, but many have a different destination.

Not far from the factory district, Anna, a young teacher, stands ready in her small classroom. She is twenty-five, full of hope, determined to give her students a better future. Yet as she looks around, empty seats greet her again. Some children will never return. She knows they have gone to work in mills, mines, or workshops. Their parents need them to earn money; school offers no wages. Anna tries to explain that education could help their children escape poverty, but she hears the same weary answer: "We have no choice." She teaches those who remain, though she wonders how long they will stay.

Jakob, ten years old, should be among her pupils. Only months ago, he was eagerly listening in class. Now, he walks past the schoolhouse to the textile mill. For families like his, education is a distant dream.

Inside the mill, the air is thick with cotton dust, and the noise of machines never ends. Jakob's small hands are perfect for fixing broken threads—a job too dangerous for adults. Injuries are common, but no one pays much attention. Jakob works twelve, sometimes fourteen hours, earning just enough for a loaf of bread.



Well, as the saying goes, it's always better to be healthy and rich than poor and sick.



The Industrial Revolution changed the world, bringing rapid progress.

Cities grew, railways stretched across countries, and factories produced goods faster than ever before. The economy demanded more and more, but progress came at a cost.

Coal powered the factories but poisoned the air. In Manchester, London, and Berlin, people coughed up black dust. Rivers once full of fish turned dark with factory waste. Forests were cut down to build railways and industries. The gap between the rich and the poor grew wider. For the wealthy, industrial growth brought gas lighting, new fashions, and exotic goods. For the poor, it meant hunger, exhaustion, and the daily fight for survival.



Peter: "That may be true, but hold on a second. This book is supposed to be about how work changes the world—and right now, I don't really see that connection"

Every Big Problem Needs a Human Solution

And often, that **solution is a job**. Let's have a look at how it works: as factories and cities grew during the Industrial Revolution, a number of challenges arose that needed to be addressed. These included poor hygiene and health conditions in working-class neighbourhoods, dangerous working conditions in factories, and a hunger for new skills.

Among the professions that have emerged in response to these challenges are social workers, sanitation and public health workers, factory safety engineers, journalists, engineers specializing in alternative energy, urban planners, labour inspectors, public school teachers, textbook writers and publishers, night school instructors, etc.

Quick Classroom Activity

Ask your students: "If you had lived during the Industrial Revolution, what job would you create to fix a problem?" Let them imagine roles like "clean air inventor" or "city light organizer."

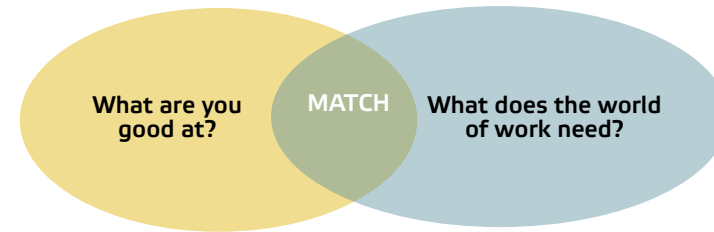
Another example of a new profession that emerged in response to the poverty, chaos, and uncertainty during this period was that of a **career counsellor**—a guide for those searching not just for work, but for purpose.

Frank Parsons, the first known career counsellor in our history, understood something powerful: **careers can be tools for change**. His profession didn't just help individuals—it helped society adapt and grow.

Parsons saw the chaos in the job market and realized that people need help **choosing careers that match their talents—and serve society**. He asked two simple questions:

- > What are you good at?
- > What does the world of work need?

Next step? **How do these two match together?**



This may seem ordinary today, but back then it was revolutionary. Before, workers were expected to fit the machine—not the other way around. Frank Parsons highlights an important idea: **problems can be viewed as opportunities**. And our careers can be the tools we use to tackle these challenges.

Peter: "I understand. But there were other problems too, weren't there?"

Authors: "Humankind faced many problems during industrialization. Nothing can be solved at once, so we must decide where to start."

"I wonder what I would have prioritized back then..."



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Step into the shoes of a decision-maker during the Industrial Revolution. Choose your path – then see the impact!



Choose your path

Grow cities and factories fast, no matter the cost.

Slow down progress to protect workers.

Speak up for nature, even if no one listens.

What
new job or profession would appear because of your choice?

Who
benefits – and who loses?

How
would your city look in 20 years?

What
new job or profession would appear because of your choice?

Who
benefits – and who loses?

How
would your city look in 20 years?

What
new job or profession would appear because of your choice?

Who
benefits – and who loses?

How
would your city look in 20 years?

Discuss & Reflect

Share your creations.

Debate: Was your choice sustainable in the long run?
Would you choose differently today?

There is no wrong answer – but history shows: true progress only lasts when it balances people, economy, and environment.

Peter: "Now, I wonder what happened next."



WAR INDUSTRY AND RECOVERY (1914–1950)

Every era brings challenges, but few times were as hard as the years between 1914 and 1950. After the fast industrial growth of the 19th century, nations had built strong economies, big cities, and busy trade networks. Progress brought prosperity—but also fierce competition for resources. These tensions exploded into **two devastating world wars**, changing millions of lives, reshaping societies, and harming the environment.

Life during wartime was a daily struggle. Factories that once made clothes and everyday goods were quickly repurposed to produce weapons, ammunition, and military supplies. Entire industries shifted to war production, using massive amounts of coal and oil, and causing heavy pollution. Cities, once symbols of growth, became targets of bombing, leaving thousands homeless. Families lived with strict rationing—food, clothes, and heating were limited. **Things once taken for granted became rare luxuries.**

When the wars ended, the damage was overwhelming. Cities lay in ruins, economies collapsed, and millions of people were displaced. Returning soldiers found no jobs waiting for them. Factories, used to producing weapons, struggled to shift back to peacetime work.



Well, nature also suffered...



Women who had filled essential jobs during the war were expected to step aside and return to their homes. Some did, but **many fought to keep their new independence**, sparking debates that would fuel feminist movements for decades.

Entire communities were broken. Families had lost fathers and sons. Migrants flooded cities already struggling with housing and jobs. Social tensions grew.

Bombings destroyed forests and cities, factories polluted rivers and skies, natural resources were drained faster than ever, and few people were thinking about environmental protection. A handful of scientists warned about pollution and resource shortages, but their voices were mostly unheard. **The idea of sustainability was still far in the future.**



Can you think of examples of new jobs that emerged in this period of history?

Peter: "If I understand correctly, the challenge here was war?"

Authors: "Exactly. The war created a need for new jobs such as munitions workers, aircraft engineers, communications technicians, codebreakers and cryptographers, propaganda writers and artists, war correspondents."

"And after the war?"

"There was a strong need to rebuild and at least partially mitigate the devastating effects of these conflicts. Reconstruction engineers and urban planners were rebuilding and redesigning cities, public health officers, teachers for displaced children, veteran services workers were trying to help people get back to normal life."

WHAT ABOUT CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN THIS ERA?

Between 1914 and 1950, people became accustomed to the idea that a career is something one can (within certain limits) choose. However, the main task of schools was still to equip children with knowledge; career development support was more like one-off vocational assistance.

Peter: "I wonder, what was the role of a career counsellor in this turbulent era... Did they help people cope with all those big changes?"



One of the key thinkers who built on early career ideas was **John Holland**. His well-known **RIASEC model** (realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, conventional) emerged in the 1950s. Finding the "right fit" was believed to lead to greater satisfaction and success. This model continues to be used in career counselling in the 21st century, despite its limitations.



The idea that there is a lid for every pot sounds appealing.

Meanwhile, **Donald Super** began to challenge the idea that a career is a one-time decision. His theory—**life-span, life-space**—suggested that people grow and change and so do their careers. Although this thinking was ahead of its time, it would later inspire a more flexible approach to career education.

In the first half of the 20th century, most people still trained for one job and stayed there. But seeds were being planted for how we think about career development today: **not as a single choice, but as a path that unfolds over time.**

These ideas helped people understand that careers are not just about jobs, but about purpose, adaptability, and impact—but this would come later in the future...



Pop quiz! Pick Your Answer Before the Bell Rings:

1. A student says, "I don't know what job to choose!" You:

- a) Hand them a shovel and wish them luck
- b) Give them a multiple-choice "aptitude test" and tell them what they're probably good at
- c) Invite them to explore who they are, what the world needs, and how life changes

Correct answer: c)

But for many decades, b) was the popular approach.

2. Your colleague, Mr. Holland, says there are six kinds of people. Which one is NOT on his list?

- a) Realistic
- b) Artistic
- c) Sleepy
- d) Conventional

Correct answer: c)

"Sleepy" is a dwarf, not a career type (yet).

3. Donald Super introduced the idea that...

- a) People change over time (shocking!)
- b) Career paths aren't straight lines
- c) Life has multiple roles: worker, learner, parent, daydreamer
- d) All of the above

Correct answer: d)

Super believed in the evolution of people and their careers.

4. What does all this have to do with sustainability?

- a) Wait, are we talking about climate change again?
- b) Students who find meaningful careers can help solve real-world problems
- c) When careers match people and the planet, the future looks a bit less apocalyptic
- d) All of the above

Correct answer: d)

Careers aren't just about income—they're about impact.

5. What's one thing you, as a teacher, can do?

- a) Inspire one student at a time
- b) Bring career conversations into ANY subject
- c) Help students believe they matter
- d) All of the above (and still finish your coffee while it's warm)

Correct answer: d)

You're doing more than you think.

Quiz Scorecard:



0–2 correct:

You might be stuck in 1935. We've got worksheets to help.

3–4 correct:

You're channeling Holland with a dash of Super.



5 correct:

Congratulations, you're a career-sustainability legend in the making.



POST-WAR BOOM AND GLOBALIZATION (1950–1990)

The world changed faster than ever before. After the devastation of two world wars, **countries focused on rebuilding**. Cities rose from the ruins, industries restarted, and societies worked hard to create better lives. The economy boomed—and so did new opportunities and new challenges:



This period gave birth to many new professions—**computer engineers, satellite technicians, marketing specialists, international trade advisors, and social workers**.

And, for the first time, a few people started thinking seriously about the planet. **Environmental scientists, urban planners, and eco-journalists** appeared. Green careers were still very rare, but the seeds were planted.



Authors: "So, are you curious how career development looked during the post-war boom?"

Peter: "Sure. But please keep it brief."



CAREER COUNSELLING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS

Career counselling as direct work with students has been gradually introduced since the 1960s. We are still talking about a time when a career was mostly a one-time life choice.

Career development began to receive greater attention in the 1980s and 1990s. At that time, it was clear not only to Donald Super that people had to adapt to change during their lives and adjust their careers to the current situation.



At that time, new topics emerged in the field of career development:

1. Career education as the development of career management skills.

This shifts **responsibility for one's own career to each individual**. In order to be able to take care of themselves, they need to be able to present themselves, make decisions, seek opportunities, plan, etc.

2. Career development of marginalized groups.

The issue of social justice and equal opportunities is also finding its way into career theories. One of the most important is **Linda Gottfredson's theory of self-creation, circumscription, and compromise**. She realized that the limits we put on ourselves are based on our self-concept, which we build during childhood in the context of the society we live in. As a result, different ambitions emerge among boys and girls, who choose careers that are "appropriate" to their social status and gender.

The task of teachers and career counsellors is to **remove these pointless limitations** and motivate children to choose a career based on their abilities, not their gender or social status.

DIGITAL AND GREEN REVOLUTION (1990–TODAY)



Peter: "So, after all that—industry, war, rebuilding—did the world finally get it right?"

Authors: "We've made progress, Peter. But new times brought new challenges. We entered the digital age almost too fast. Computers, smartphones, satellites, the internet... they changed everything, especially work."

"More machines, fewer people?"

"In many places, yes. Repetitive jobs started disappearing. But new careers popped up—**software developers, data analysts, cybersecurity experts, app designers**. Later, **AI engineers and digital content creators**."

"Right, and now there's ChatGPT, smart robots... even virtual teachers. Hard to keep up."



*"That's why adaptability became a skill. And during the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw it clearly. Offices moved online, and schools turned digital overnight. Remote work became normal. New jobs were born—**digital learning designers, virtual event managers, mental health coaches**."*

"And after COVID?"

"The pressure didn't stop. Climate change accelerated. There are more floods, fires, and heatwaves every year. Migrants are fleeing homes not only because of war, but also because crops failed or cities ran out of water. Mental health challenges are growing. And so is eco-anxiety."

"I see. And all this... creates new professions?"

*"Exactly. There's huge demand for **green architects, carbon footprint analysts, climate adaptation planners, biodiversity officers, AI ethicists**... and yes, for teachers like you to connect all these dots."*

"Me again?"

"Always you. You help students navigate the chaos, see how their passions can meet the planet's needs. Green Career Education is about showing that every job—doctor, farmer, designer, coder—can be done in a way that helps both people and the Earth."

WHAT ELSE CAN BE SAID ABOUT CAREER EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS?

It was not until the beginning of the 21st century, thanks to the support of the European Commission, that career education came to the fore and the development of career management skills became part of the school curriculum.

Peter: "I see. So that's where my role comes in?"

Authors: "Exactly. We're talking about how the world keeps changing and how nothing is really certain anymore, not even when it comes to careers."

"Parents always ask me which school will guarantee their child a secure future."

"The truth is, the only thing we can count on is the very problems we're facing—like climate change."



So, nothing is certain but death, taxes, and climate change.



“So, if a young person chooses a career connected to solving that problem, they won’t have to worry about running out of work?”

“Precisely. And beyond stability, they’ll have something even more important—a sense of purpose.”

“Purpose sounds great on paper. But how do you explain that to a teenager who just wants a job that pays the bills?”

Let’s play a game

Many people find meaning in life through their careers. The more clearly they understand the problem or challenge their work addresses, the more meaning they are likely to find in it.



Do you dare to solve our 'Career Cipher'?
It contains a total of 13 occupations, all of which have emerged only recently. Chances are you won’t be able to name them all—and that’s perfectly fine.

Your challenge:

1. Can you find all 13 occupations?
2. What do you think these people do?
Why is their work important?
Who—or what—are they helping?
3. Can you come up with a name for each occupation?
4. What challenge or change might have led to the creation of this profession?
What human need does it respond to?

To get you started, here is one possible way of reading one of the characters in the illustration: **digital detox coach** emerged in response to information overload and our growing dependence on digital technologies. They help people restore balance, focus, and well-being in an always-connected world.

How many occupations can you spot?

Full list: urban shepherd | drone operator | emergency shelter builder | upcycling designer | aquaponics specialist | age management and wellbeing specialist | cybersecurity specialist | telemedicine specialist | urban farmer | rewilding specialist | digital detox coach | data miner | community coordinator



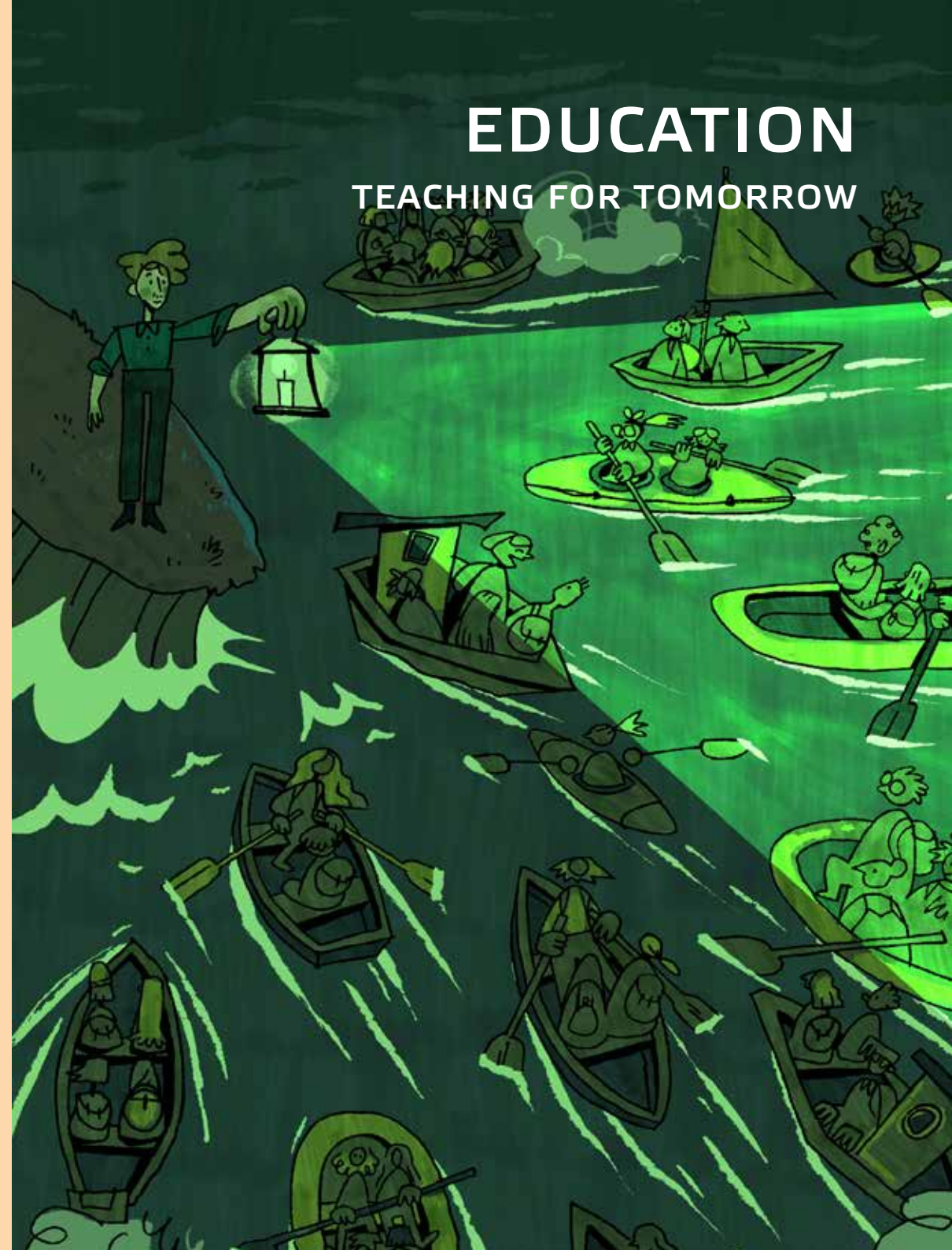
EDUCATION

TEACHING FOR TOMORROW

Throughout history, **work has shaped the world in both good and bad ways**. The decisions people made about their work, what they built, and how they solved problems left strong marks on society. Social challenges like industrialization or wars often pushed people to create new professions.

Sustainability means balancing economic growth, social well-being, and care for the environment. But **in the past, survival and economic success often came first**. People rarely thought about protecting nature or future generations. Their choices built the world we live in today—with its progress and its problems.

As a teacher, you play a key role. **You can help students see how past choices shaped today's world and how new professions were born from challenges**. By learning from history, students can find inspiration to make better, more sustainable choices for the future.





Peter: “OK, I get it. You say that we should learn from our past. It is obvious that economic growth and technology bring opportunities, but without care for people and nature, the price is high.”

Authors: “For decades, many systems followed a **neoliberal mindset**—markets above all, profit before people or the planet. It brought some growth, yes—but also burnout, inequality, and deep environmental harm. Now, we need something different.”

“A shift from endless competition to cooperation?”

“Exactly. From profit to purpose. From short-term gains to long-term care. And that shift starts with how we prepare students for the world of work.”

“Still, I sometimes worry we’re putting too much pressure on young people. Like it’s all up to them to fix what’s broken.”

“It’s a fair worry, Peter. But this isn’t about burdening them, it’s about **empowering** them. We’re not asking them to carry the weight of the world. We’re showing them that work isn’t just about making a living, it can be about **making a difference.**”

“Green careers are a chance to align your talents with the needs of the planet. A paid job that feels meaningful. That’s the **power of Green Career Education**—it says, “**You don’t have to do everything, but you can do something.**”

Green careers aren’t just a responsibility. It’s a chance.



As economies evolve to meet environmental goals, new job opportunities are emerging across sectors, from clean energy and sustainable agriculture to green finance and environmental policy. However, this shift also demands a workforce equipped with the right skills, knowledge, and values to support and accelerate the green transition.

Green Career Education plays a crucial role by:

- > Preparing learners for emerging green jobs and industries
- > Reskilling and upskilling workers in traditional sectors to adopt sustainable practices
- > Fostering environmental literacy and systems thinking
- > Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in sustainability



Peter: “I just need to clarify. You are talking about Green Career Education, right? But I’ve also heard about green career guidance. What’s the difference?”

ONE VISION, MANY TERMS: UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF GREEN CAREER EDUCATION

As educators, we play a key role in preparing students for the future, and not just any future, but one that is sustainable, fair, and full of opportunity. That’s where the following three terms come in. They may sound similar, but they each highlight a different part of the puzzle:

Green Career Guidance

This focuses on helping students explore and prepare for jobs that directly contribute to environmental sustainability—like working in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, or environmental protection.

Think: “How can I guide students toward careers that help the planet?”

Sustainable Career Guidance

This is broader. It's about helping students find careers that are not only environmentally friendly but also socially and economically sustainable.

Think: "How can I help students choose careers that are good for them, good for society, and good for the planet—long-term?"

Green Career Education

This refers to teaching the skills and knowledge needed for green careers as well as embedding sustainability into all career education. It means teaching students to think about the environmental and social impact of any career path they choose.

Think: "What should we teach to prepare students for careers that can contribute to a healthier planet and a fairer society?"



Peter: "So, in order to prepare young people for green jobs, which skills and knowledge should we focus on?"



Core values are environmental responsibility, sustainability mindset, ethical awareness, collaboration and inclusivity, and innovation and adaptability.

Key skills include technical and scientific skills, soft skills, digital and analytical skills, as well as policy and legal knowledge.

By integrating sustainability into career development, we can create a workforce that is not only skilled and adaptable but also committed to fostering a healthier, more sustainable world. This chapter will explore the importance of green career education, its key components, and how it can be effectively implemented to support a sustainable future.

Peter: "It all makes sense and sounds nice, but, truth be told, I still have no idea how to communicate all those big ideas in my classroom..."

Authors: "Yeah, so far we have been perhaps a bit too theoretical. Hope you still have some strength left as now we dive right into the practice!"

Green or sustainable,
I'm happy
either way...
as long as we move!



TEACHING FOR A GREENER FUTURE —ELINA'S MISSION

In 2025, in the small town of Polvijärvi, Finland, there is an 8th-grade schoolteacher named Elina. She is known for her innovative teaching methods and unwavering commitment to sustainability. Elina believes that education is the key to a better future, and she is determined to inspire her students to become environmental stewards, focusing on green careers.

As in many other schools around Europe, Polvijärvi's lower secondary school has worked with environmental education for many years. They have had campaigns not to waste food at school lunch, bike to school day, and outdoor school days. But Elina wants to expand the focus from general environmental awareness to specific skills and knowledge that prepare her students for greener careers.

Elina decides to find good examples from existing theory. First, she finds **Peter Plant**, a career counsellor, researcher, author of many career guidance publications, and Professor Emeritus at the University of South-Eastern Norway. Peter is the originator of the concept of **Green Guidance**.

Elina reads Plant's principles for green guidance and arguments that **meaningful work must consider its environmental and social consequences, not just personal gain**. His approach connects career choices with ecological awareness, social justice, and sustainability, showing that guidance can be a tool for both personal development and planetary care.

As she dives more deeply into the topic of green guidance, she discovers **Miram Dimsit's "Five dimensions of Environmentally Sustainable Career Guidance,"** which really resonates with her. Miriam Dimsit, a career counsellor, researcher, and teacher from Denmark, is particularly known for her work on sustainable career guidance. She emphasizes the importance of integrating sustainability into career development to address the current ecological crisis and support young people's vocational aspirations. Her five dimensions aim to connect individuals' careers with broader environmental and social goals.



THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE CAREER GUIDANCE

1. The Affective Dimension

Focus: Emotional connection to nature and empathy for the planet and others.
Activity for the classroom: Nature Resonance Walk

Take students outside to a quiet natural spot and invite them to slow down and observe their surroundings—noticing sounds, movement, textures, and signs of life. Ask them to notice how nature makes them feel (e.g., calm, curious, connected, or even worried or disconnected). Then encourage them to think about what this says about what they enjoy or feel good doing—for example, enjoying quiet observation, working with others, or caring for the environment—and how this can help them understand what they might like to do more of in the future.

2. The Social-ecological Dimension

Focus: Build solidarity with the world through careering.
Activity for the classroom: Career Impact Mapping

Have students choose a profession and map out its environmental and social impacts (e.g., carbon footprint, community effects, impacts on quality of life). Then brainstorm concrete actions that people in this profession could take to better contribute to a socially and environmentally sustainable community for all living beings.

3. The Educational Dimension

Focus: Exploring environmental impacts of different career paths.
Activity for the classroom: Sustainability Career Research

Assign students to research careers that actively contribute to sustainability (e.g., renewable energy engineer, urban farmer, environmental educator) and present how education and skills align with these paths.

4. The Transformational Dimension

Focus: Encouraging hope, imagination, and creative action when envisioning a meaningful vocational future.
Activity for classroom: Letter to the Future

Ask students to write a letter to a future generation describing the kind of world they hope to leave behind. Encourage them to reflect on how their career choices could contribute to that vision.

5. The Political-ideological Dimension

Focus: Understanding how values, power structures, and political decisions shape career opportunities and sustainable futures.
Activity for the classroom: Who Decides?

Invite students to explore how a selected sustainability-related issue (e.g., renewable energy, waste reduction, fair labour, safe bike paths) is influenced by different actors—such as governments, businesses, communities, and citizens. Have students map what each group cares about and how their decisions shape the community and the kinds of future jobs connected to the issue.

While preparing her new class, Elina decides to **use AI** to help her adapt the concept of green thinking to the classroom. She hesitates though, wondering how ethical it is to ask AI for help—she feels a bit like she’s cheating. On the other hand, since her colleagues don’t seem to have the same passion and interest in this topic, AI seems to be the only available source of guidance to her.

Peter: “I am starting to be really curious to see what will come of this...”

With the help of AI, one crisp autumn morning, Elina stands in front of her class ready to introduce their **new project: “Green My Career.”** She explains to her students that, at the end, they will be able to:

- > identify basic environmental impacts related to common careers



So many dimensions, and yet it's simple—we all live on Earth, therefore we must look after it.



- > propose sustainable or green alternatives within a chosen career
- > reflect on how personal interests can align with environmental responsibility

In their first class, Elina decides to start by exploring how traditional careers can be adapted to be more environmentally friendly. To open the topic, she asks her class: "Think of a job you admire or might want to do someday. Now imagine doing that job in a way that helps the environment. What could that look like?" Some of her students share their ideas with the whole group.

Elina continues introducing the concept of green skills (e.g., problem-solving, environmental awareness, efficient resource use) and how we can make any job more sustainable. She uses a few examples:

- > a **chef** reducing food waste and using local ingredients
- > a **truck driver** switching to electric vehicles
- > a **fashion designer** using recycled fabrics
- > a **farmer** switching from producing meat to growing peas

Her students get to choose a career that they are interested in. Elina has prepared a few occupations beforehand, so students without a favorite one can participate in the activity. Elina then provides the students with the following worksheet:

Green My Career—Student Worksheet

Name: _____
Date: _____

Step 1: Pick a Career

What job are you interested in?

My chosen career: _____

Step 2: Learn about the Job

Write a short description of what people in this job usually do:

Step 3: Environmental Impact

Think about how this job might affect the environment. How could this job harm the environment (if at all)? Check all that apply or add your own ideas:

- Uses a lot of energy or water
- Produces waste or pollution
- Uses non-recyclable materials
- Requires a lot of transportation
- Other: _____

Step 4: Make It Green!

Now, imagine ways to make the job more sustainable. What changes could make this job better for the environment? Write at least two ideas:

1. _____

2. _____

Step 5: Green Skills

What green skills or knowledge would someone need to do this job in a more eco-friendly way? Check all that apply or add your own ideas:

- Creative problem-solving
- Knowledge of recycling or waste reduction
- Energy-saving strategies
- Environmental awareness
- Teamwork
- Other: _____

Step 6: Green Job Title & Slogan

Give your green version of this job a fun new name and create a short slogan!

My new job title: _____
My green slogan: _____

What about Green Chef: Cooking up meals that care for the Earth!



The students are given time to work on their sheets, and at the end of her lesson, Elina invites them to share their “greened” careers. The group discusses how easy or hard it was to think sustainably and if they could see themselves in a green version of their chosen career.

Since Earth Week is approaching, the students and Elina decide to display their greener careers in the school cafeteria.



Peter: “What if I teach kids younger than 8th graders? Can I still use this activity?”

To adapt the “Green My Career” lesson for younger students aged 7 to 12, make it more **playful, visual, and imagination-driven**. At this age, children are still forming their understanding of jobs and the environment, so it’s important to use **simple, clear language**. Rather than using abstract terms like sustainability or green skills, we can talk about “helping the Earth,” “protecting nature,” or “being Earth-friendly.”

The following adaptation focuses on **creative expression, environmental empathy, and positive action**—making it a fun, age-appropriate introduction to the world of green careers.

Green My Career—Lesson Tips for Younger Students (aged 7 to 12)

1. Encourage students to imagine what they want to be when they grow up. Help them with questions and visuals to think about how that job could be done in a way that takes care of the planet.

You can ask questions such as: “What job would you love to do one day?”, “What does that job need to work well?”, “What could that person do to help nature?”

Show images or read short stories about community helpers who are eco-friendly—for example, a gardener who plants trees, a librarian who saves electricity, or a pilot flying a solar-powered plane.

2. Include a hands-on, artistic activity such as drawing or creating a simple collage. Students could draw themselves doing their chosen job, then add pictures or words showing how they are helping the Earth in that role.

You can support them with word banks, picture cards, or real-life examples. To spark ideas, include things like recycling bins, wind turbines, gardens, or bicycles. A child who dreams of being a builder might, for example, draw themselves using solar panels and building homes with natural materials like bamboo.

3. At the end of the activity, allow students to share their work with the class or in small groups.

Encourage them to use simple sentences; for example, “I want to work as a veterinarian. I will use eco-friendly products and help save endangered animals”; “I will be a teacher. I will recycle paper and grow plants in the classroom”; or “I will work as a flight attendant. I will encourage passengers to reuse cups and choose vegetarian meals.”

4. Turn their work into a “Green Jobs Gallery” on a classroom wall or hallway display. This not only celebrates their ideas but also shows that every job has the power to protect the planet, even ones that might not seem “green” at first.

After the activity, hold a short reflection session with the whole class. You can use some of these questions: “How did I manage to change my chosen job so that it helps nature?”; “During the activity, I enjoyed... the most”; “During the activity, I didn't enjoy...”; and “Thanks to the activity, I...”



Do not forget to have fun!

IT TAKES A VILLAGE: ELINA BRINGS PARENTS INTO THE GREEN DIALOGUE

As the school year progresses, Elina sees how integrating the concept of green thinking into her classroom truly enriches her lessons. She decides to take the project a step further and organizes a debate for parents.



To her surprise, only a few parents show interest in the topic of Green Career Education. During one class, she shares her frustration with her students, when someone from the back rows shouts: "Of course, my folks don't go anywhere where they can't get a free meal."

Elina realizes that her student is on to something. After all, food brings people together. So, she comes up with an idea for interactive vegetarian cooking that could be, at the same time, an informative evening. And that is how "Veggie Delight Night" with class 8B happens. By serving seasonal and locally-grown vegetables, Elina inspires the parents to make a sustainable choice. The whole event is about communicating one simple idea: **not everyone has to make a huge contribution, but everyone can take small actions in the right direction.**



A greener dinner today can inspire a greener career tomorrow.

BUILDING THE FUTURE: STUDENTS AS GREEN ENTREPRENEURS

One rainy Tuesday afternoon, Elina walks into the staff room to grab a cup of coffee. She finds her colleague Pekka already there, flipping through a stack of notes.

"Hey, Elina," he says, looking up. "Do you have a minute?"
"Sure," she replies, sitting down across from him.

"I've been thinking a lot about this enterprise course I'm teaching," Pekka begins. "I want to encourage the students to start their own summer businesses. I wish they would put more thought into it though and maybe come up with some ideas for business that are more long-term, somehow more meaningful for them.... But I'm not sure how to do it. Is there perhaps some inspiration for my course in your new project you talk so often about?"

"That's a great question," replies Elina. "Green Career Education is all about preparing students for a future where environmental and social responsibility are central to every profession—not just in green industries, but across the board. When we talk about sustainable business, we're giving students the tools to think critically about how their choices as entrepreneurs affect the world around them."

"So, it's not just about starting a business," Pekka says, "but about starting the right kind of business? I guess what I really want is to show them all the possibilities."

*"Exactly," Elina replies. "It's about **showing them that they can be part of the solution**, whether they're designing a product, offering a service, or just choosing where to source their materials. It's not about fitting into a box—it's about **thinking creatively, acting responsibly, and finding your own way** to make a difference." Sustainable business can, for example, focus on reusable packaging, bicycles instead of cars, or transforming old materials into jewellery.*

From this height, student business ideas are easy to spot.



ACTIVE HOPE IN THE CLASSROOM: TOOLS FOR FACING REALITY AND INSPIRING ACTION

Peter: "My students keep asking me about the future. Fires, floods, wars... They say, "What's the point of learning anything if the world is getting worse?" And honestly, I don't know what to tell them. I don't want to serve them empty optimism, but I also don't want to drag them down with my own doubts."

*Authors: "That's exactly why we use **Active Hope**. It's not about pretending everything is fine, it's about facing reality honestly and still showing that action is possible."*



“Sounds nice in theory. But in practice? If I open that conversation, won’t it just make them more anxious?”

*“That’s where the framework helps. **Active Hope gives you steps**—you don’t have to improvise. **Gratitude, naming fears, seeing solutions, and finding small actions.** It turns worry into direction.”*

“So, I don’t need to have all the answers? Just hold the space for them?”

“Exactly. Your role is not to fix the future—it’s to guide students to see that they have a part in shaping it. In the words of the writer C.S. Lewis: “You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.”

Peter’s doubts are familiar. Many teachers feel the same. They want to be honest with their students, but they also want to keep a sense of possibility alive. That balance is difficult to hold without a clear structure.

Why Active Hope Matters in Schools

This is where the book **Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We’re in with Unexpected Resilience and Power**, written by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone, becomes so valuable. Although written for adults, its central ideas can be adapted for schools. The book provides a simple but powerful framework that helps us and our students face global challenges—climate change, injustice, ecological collapse—without sliding into despair.

Active Hope is not about passive optimism. It is about **learning to face reality, acknowledging our feelings, and then choosing actions that align with our deepest values.** It is a practice, a set of steps that can help students discover resilience and agency in the face of daunting challenges.

The book talks about **key themes** that can help teachers attain active hope in students:

There is still hope for mankind yet!



Facing Reality

The book encourages readers to fully acknowledge the scale and seriousness of the global challenges we face—climate change, environmental degradation, social injustice—without becoming paralyzed by fear or hopelessness.

Although it might sound counterintuitive, addressing and talking about the fears that each of us has is essential for starting to map out our hopes and work towards them. At the same time, we take the time to validate ourselves and our feelings. As teachers, it’s important to **confirm our students’ fears** and be willing to **truly listen without judgment.** It not only helps us create a classroom culture where students feel supported and encouraged but also gives us a starting point from which to work.

Work That Reconnects

Central to the book is a process developed by Joanna Macy called “The Work That Reconnects,” a transformative framework involving four stages:

1. **Coming from Gratitude** – Cultivating appreciation for life. This is where a teacher can work very actively by implementing gratitude and mindfulness exercises in the classroom.

By asking students questions about the love they feel in their lives and to whom they’d like to give thanks, we are opening their eyes to gratitude. In doing so, we help strengthen the connection to our inner selves. You can use the simple technique of sentence starters, providing your students with a beginning of a sentence and letting them finish it.

I Love...

I’d like to thank...

By allowing our students to answer these questions, we can help them start feeling emotions of rising energy and warmth within.

2. Honoring Our Pain for the World – Allowing ourselves to feel and express grief and concern.

By opening up about the fears and concerns that we hold, we're also recognizing the value of something. It might evoke a call for action. Concerns are likely to arise about whether we have sufficient resources, how long our planet can last, etc. To start this step, let students finish the following sentence:

My concerns include...

3. Seeing with New Eyes—Shifting perspective to recognize our interconnection and potential.

Research shows that our impact comes from what others see us do. We influence one another—when we do something good, it becomes a reference point for others.

Asking even one of these following questions is a good step forward. It reinforces us and gives us a guiding impulse for action.

Facing these concerns, what inspires me?

What do I wish for myself?
What do I wish for people in my life, the community?

What is something I deeply hope for?

What hopes am I sharing with other people?

4. Going Forth—Committing to meaningful action.

Unlike passive hope, which waits for external change, Active Hope is about becoming an agent of change. It is not about optimism, but about consciously choosing to move toward a desired future and taking steps to help bring it about.



As a teacher you might share stories of individuals and communities making a positive impact on the environment. This can include successful green projects, innovative solutions, and inspiring leaders in the field. Ask your students:

What is my part in this?
How can I help that happen?

The part I'd like to play in support of this is...

What can I do next week?
The specific step I will take next week is...

Empowerment Through Engagement

The authors emphasize that meaningful action, even when outcomes are uncertain, can be a source of strength, purpose, and empowerment. They encourage us to turn up for our community and turn away from the things which do not contribute to creating a sustainable future. They urge us to try to find a kinder, more compassionate way of life.

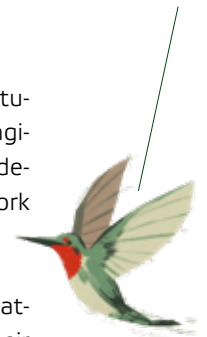
Active Hope reminds us that action itself is empowering. Even small steps—planting a tree, reducing waste at school, writing to a local leader—can turn despair into purpose. Teachers don't need to solve everything. They need to model resilience, curiosity, and the courage to act.



Active Hope and Green Career Education belong together. When students connect their hopes and worries with concrete career paths—engineers working with renewable energy, teachers leading eco-projects, designers creating sustainable fashion—they realize that their future work can be part of the solution.

Teachers are not expected to have all the answers. What matters is creating space where students can face reality, share emotions, and imagine their next steps. By practicing Active Hope, we help them discover that the future is not fixed and that through their learning and their careers, they have the power to change it.

Your career is not just a way to earn a living, it is also a way to shape the world you want to live in.



Even small steps can shift us from worry to action.

How to start:

- > **Invest in resilience:** Take part in professional development focused on eco-emotional resilience so you feel equipped to support students through difficult conversations.
- > **Use proven frameworks:** Try out *The Work That Reconnects* to guide structured dialogues about fears, gratitude, and action, rather than improvising.
- > **Create a listening culture:** Build whole-school practices where students' voices are welcomed, through class councils, project groups, or assemblies, and show them that their ideas lead to real changes.



You can use the following **map of seven sentence starters** as a quick cheat sheet while introducing the concept of active hope into your teaching.

SEVEN SENTENCE STARTERS IN SUPPORT OF ACTIVE HOPE



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ELINA LEARNS ABOUT ARISING PHENOMENA IN THE GREEN FUTURE

Back in Polvijärvi, the school year has been demanding but rewarding. Elina has poured her energy into lessons, projects, and conversations with her students. With support from her headmaster, colleagues, and the parents, she feels part of a strong school community. Yet late at night, when the classroom is quiet, a question often lingers: *Am I preparing my students for the world they will actually live in?*

You humans keep planning the future as if it would sit still long enough to be planned.

That is why Elina signs up for a webinar on *arising phenomena*—new and emerging trends shaping the green future. As the first slides appear on her screen, she leans in, curious and a little nervous. She wonders: *How can I help my students imagine possibilities I can barely picture myself? What if the professions they dream of never come into existence?*

The speakers talk about green innovation, Good Tech, decentralized systems, and the need for lifelong learning. At first, it feels overwhelming, so many changes, so much uncertainty. But slowly a different thought rises: *This is not just about challenges. It's about opportunities.*

Completing Elina's webinars confirmed that she is on the right track with her students. And even though she cannot give them all the answers, she can guide them to **ask the right questions, to stay curious, and to believe that their work, one day, will help shape a more sustainable world.**

As she reflects, each theme from the webinar takes on a new, very practical meaning for her classroom:



1. The Rise of Green Innovation

Elina thinks of her students in science class, building simple prototypes or testing new ideas. Green innovation reminds her that innovation is not only about shiny gadgets or start-ups, it's about rethinking how we live. Whether solar panels on rooftops, houses that need almost no energy, or products built to be reused instead of thrown away, these solutions are shaping the world that her students will inherit.

Why does it matter? She sees her role as preparing students to connect science, creativity, and ethics. Every invention carries responsibility, and future jobs will increasingly demand "eco-thinking" alongside technical skills.



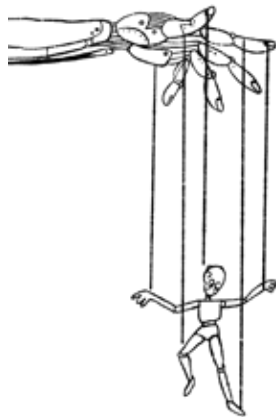
2. AI for Good (Good Tech)

When the webinar turns to artificial intelligence, Elina feels both excited and uneasy. AI can predict climate change, support doctors, or free teachers from repetitive tasks. But it can also misuse data or widen inequalities.

Why does it matter? She realizes her students need not only digital skills but also ethical judgment. Teachers can spark discussions about how technology should serve people and the planet, not the other way around.

3. Lifelong Learning and Reskilling

This part hits Elina personally. She knows how much she has learned since finishing university—and how quickly new skills become essential. She imagines her students entering a world where one qualification will never be enough.



Robots and algorithms? Don't be scared—with a kind heart and clear mind, people stay in charge.



Why does it matter? The best gift teachers can give students is the love of learning itself. If students leave school curious and confident in their ability to learn new things, they will likely be more employable and resilient.



4. Decentralized Systems

The idea of decentralized systems intrigues Elina the most. She imagines her rural community running on local solar grids or her students one day building cooperative businesses powered by digital platforms. These systems promise more independence but also demand trust and fairness.

Why does it matter? She wants to help her students see themselves not just as job seekers, but as citizens who can shape how resources and power are shared. Discussions about fairness, participation, and responsibility suddenly feel more urgent than ever.

5. Global Collaboration

Climate change, pandemics, and economic crises ignore national borders. Solutions demand teamwork across countries, cultures, and disciplines. Whether it's sharing research or building international agreements, cooperation is no longer optional, it is about survival.

Why does it matter? Elina sees her classroom as the perfect training ground for global citizenship. By encouraging projects with schools abroad, discussing world challenges, or simply valuing diverse perspectives, she can prepare her students for a future where cooperation means survival.

I agree, a forest works fine without a boss tree!



6. Ethical and Personalized Consumerism

The next theme makes Elina think about her students' love for fashion and gadgets. She imagines them learning to ask, *Who made this? Was it fair? What impact does it have on the planet?* Consumers are already voting with their wallets, and eco-friendly brands and apps tracking carbon footprints are gaining ground.

Why does it matter? Teachers can help students connect everyday choices—what they eat, wear, or buy—to global impacts. This shows them that personal responsibility and professional responsibility are deeply linked.



7. New Ways of Governing

When the speakers mention universal basic income, new digital rights, and climate assemblies, Elina wonders how much her students actually know about how societies make decisions. Many of them feel politics is distant or powerless. Yet here was proof: systems can and do change.

Why does it matter? Young people often feel powerless about politics. However, by showing them how systems can change, teachers empower them to see participation as meaningful. Tomorrow's citizens and leaders are sitting in today's classrooms.



By the end of the webinar, each phenomenon, once just a buzzword, has become a teaching opportunity. Elina understands that while she cannot predict the exact jobs her students will have, she can prepare them with the **mindset**, **skills**, and **hope** they will need to thrive in a rapidly changing, interconnected world.

LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON GREEN CAREER EDUCATION

A year has passed. The same little café. But this time, Peter isn't sitting alone. He's engaged in lively conversation with the people from the large, noisy group he met here a year ago...

Authors: "Hi Peter, long time no see! How have you been since we last spoke?"

Peter: "Well... After you invited me on the adventurous journey through your book, I needed some time to digest and organize all the new information and impressions..."

"So, you found some new food for your thoughts, that's great to hear! And if we may be so bold, what stuck with you the most?"

"I realized that *Green Career Education* isn't about adding more to our already full plates, it's about shifting how we teach. I've started weaving in real-world examples, asking students what they think about new technologies, and connecting lessons to sustainability. I also tried out some exercises outdoors."

"You've captured the main idea. It's about helping students see the bigger picture and understand how their choices matter."

"The students enjoyed it. One asked if they could become a climate scientist, and another wanted to design eco-friendly buildings. I never thought a simple shift in conversation and teaching could spark so much interest."

"That's the power of context and curiosity. You're showing them that their future can be meaningful and impactful."

"I must confess something—at times, I got lost in your book and became really impatient because those big ideas didn't seem to connect with me."

"That is why we are so glad you accepted our invitation to accompany us while writing it. Your comments helped us communicate our main idea more clearly. But let's see if we have been successful. What is your take on it?"

"Well, I changed how I see my role—I am not "just" a teacher, I can help shape a better future."

"Amazing! Welcome to the movement, Peter. Let's toast to a better, sustainable future—and to making a difference, one lesson at a time."



As we close this handbook, let's pause for a moment. What we've shared here is more than a collection of ideas—it's an invitation to see education not only as preparation for exams or jobs but as a **powerful force for shaping a more sustainable and fair future.**

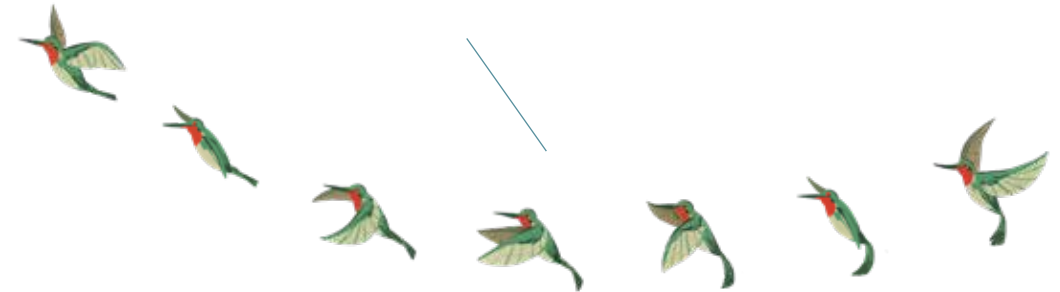
We've explored how sustainability can weave itself into career guidance, entrepreneurship, and everyday classroom practice. We've seen that students can imagine careers far beyond the familiar—roles that echo their values, creativity, and care for the planet. Yet this is not a finished map. **The work of Green Career Education is ongoing, evolving, and deeply personal.** There are no final answers, only opportunities to keep learning, questioning, and walking alongside students as they discover their own paths.

Your role as educators is not to hand over ready-made solutions but to open doors, ask daring questions, and create spaces where exploration feels safe. **The future of work will be green, yet also diverse, dynamic, and still being written,** line by line, by your students, with your guidance.

So let this final chapter whisper a simple reminder: the lessons that matter most rarely end with the bell. They carry on—in choices, in conversations, in lives shaped by the belief that what we do matters. And when young people see that their careers can be part of the solution, tomorrow begins differently.



TIME TO TAKE ACTION!



So, you've reached the end of the book—but that's not really the end, is it? Now it's your turn to bring to life the ideas from these pages.

We've prepared a set of **classroom worksheets** full of activities that help students explore how work can change the world.

They're designed to inspire reflection, discussion, and hands-on activities that encourage students to think about their own role in the world, their impact on society and nature, and how they can actively shape their future.



[Download them here:](#)

One last thing before you go.

Flip the book quickly from the last page to the first and watch the lower left corner.

You'll discover the extraordinary speed of the hummingbird's wings.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

SABINA ADANIČ

is a project coordinator at St. Stanislav's Institution in Slovenia. She joined the Green Career Education project soon after starting her work there and quickly became interested in the topic. Working with teachers made her think about the role adults have in guiding children toward the future. It also made her reflect on how much influence each of us truly has. For her, Green Career Education is about awareness, responsibility, and finding purpose in what we do.

MARKÉTA CUDLÍNOVÁ

is a career counsellor, trainer and mentor at EKS in Czechia. She studied Social Work and joined EKS out of her interest in working with people. For 14 years, she has been active as a trainer of career counseling and personal development courses and as a career counsellor, supporting both children and adults on their journey toward greater personal and professional satisfaction using playful and creative methods. Education for sustainable careers is a deeply personal topic for her, and she considers its further development in schools absolutely essential. Thanks to her parents, both environmentalists, she has been exposed to environmental protection from a young age and still enjoys spending her free time in nature, where she finds her greatest peace. She hopes her young son will develop a strong connection to nature and take part in protecting it as an adult.

NATAŠA HANUNA

is a career counsellor at St. Stanislav Institution in Slovenia. She works with children from kindergarten, through elementary and secondary school, to university students. She wants to pass her love of nature on to her students. The school has excellent conditions for this, with a beautiful outdoor classroom and lots of green space in the vicinity. Nataša regularly attends various training courses where new and innovative approaches to teaching are developed and linked to outdoor learning and drama techniques.

TOMÁŠ HARHOVSKÝ

is a trainer and outdoor learning specialist at Živica in Slovakia. He studied mathematics and chemistry teaching at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. Since September 2022, he has been part of the Hurá von! (Outdoor Learning) program in Živica, where he works with teachers across Slovakia to improve opportunities for practical education in nature and support learning directly connected to real experiences. Passionate about permaculture, wild herb and mushroom foraging, Tomáš believes these topics can be meaningfully linked to education and practical life with the aim of improving both our quality of life and the environment. He sees hands-on learning in nature as essential for developing a deep connection to the natural world and understanding our responsibility toward it.

NINA KALLIO

is a guidance counsellor at a Swedish-speaking upper secondary school in Finland. She has contributed to developing a student handbook on Green Career Education, aiming to inspire young learners to pursue environmentally responsible career paths. This approach encourages ethical awareness, sustainability thinking, and long-term motivation. Her work helps students make informed choices that support both personal development and a greener future. By integrating green values into career guidance, she bridges education with global sustainability goals. Her commitment demonstrates that education can be a powerful tool for positive change.

HELENA KOŠTÁLOVÁ

is a career coach, trainer and mentor in Czechia. She has been working in education and career development for 25 years. She studied Social Management and later deepened her expertise through a two-year Career Counseling program at Stockholm University, a summer school at the University of Montana, and training in somatic coaching. A lifelong nature enthusiast strongly influenced by her mother, a leading expert in environmental economics and sustainable development, Helena sees ecopsychology as one path toward sustainable career counseling and found great inspiration in experiential eco-art therapy training. She provides coaching for young people, leads courses for students and educators, offers mentoring to schools across Czechia, and publishes professional materials. She believes that connecting personal growth with environmental responsibility is essential for meaningful career development.

PIA LUSTIG

is a guidance counsellor at a Swedish-speaking upper secondary school in Finland. She has worked for over twenty years supporting young people in their educational and career choices. As a dedicated study counsellor, she is passionate about guiding students toward sustainable career paths that align with both their personal values and the needs of a changing world. Pia believes that career education should empower youth to make informed decisions that contribute to a more equitable and environmentally responsible future. As a contributor to this handbook, Pia brings her extensive experience and deep commitment to sustainability in education, offering valuable insights into how green career guidance can shape the future of young learners.

LENKA NĚMCOVÁ

is a career counsellor, trainer and mentor at EKS in Czechia. She studied Social and Cultural Anthropology, a field that deepened her understanding of how people and societies respond to change. Growing up close to nature nurtured her strong appreciation for the environment and shaped her belief that education and career development should reflect our responsibility toward the planet. In her work, she connects career counseling with sustainability principles and helps teachers and students discover how every profession can contribute to positive social and environmental change. She believes that young people are key agents of transformation toward a more sustainable future and considers supporting them one of the most important tasks of contemporary education.



IVANA POLÁČKOVÁ

is a CEO and trainer at *Živica and Hurá von!* in Slovakia. She studied environmental science at the Faculty of Science, Comenius University, and has been involved in various environmental education projects at *Živica* since 2000. *Živica and Hurá von!* aim to support experiential learning outdoors in schools. She came to the topic of Green Career Education thanks to an international Erasmus+ project and sees the topic of future professions as closely connected to solving current environmental global challenges. Together with her colleague Tomáš, they won the National Career Guidance Award 2025 for the aforementioned project, which they are working on together with Czech, Finnish, and Slovenian partners.

CAMILLA ROGASZEWSKA

is a school coach working at a Swedish-speaking upper secondary school in Finland. With a strong commitment to student well-being and personal development, she supports young people in reflecting on how their choices can align with both their values and the needs of our future world. She believes that career guidance should not only prepare students for the labour market but also empower them to contribute to a greener, fairer society. By meeting students in natural settings and fostering reflective conversations, Camilla believes that we—those who work with youth—can offer them the chance to become active changemakers and carry hope for the future, even in the face of global challenges.

ORGANIZATIONS

EKS is an NGO that has been providing career counseling, coaching, and education for more than twenty years. It works with children, young people, and adults, helping them explore and develop career paths that are both meaningful and sustainable.

The organization offers training courses in Czech and English, conducts international research, develops its own methodologies, and publishes professional materials. At EKS, we connect sustainable career counseling with personal career goals and individual growth while fostering responsibility toward the environment and society. Sustainability principles are integrated into all our activities—from courses and projects to specialist publications. EKS has been awarded the National Career Counseling Award six times and has also received the European Commission's Golden Star Award.

ST. STANISLAV'S INSTITUTION is a cultural and educational establishment founded in 1901 by the Archdiocese of Ljubljana, Slovenia. It consists of 6 schools and is currently educating almost 1500 students. The mission of St. Stanislav's Institution is to foster the integral personal growth of each individual in the community for the betterment of the world.

VASA ÖVNINGSSKOLA is the teacher training school of Åbo Akademi University and part of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHS), which holds national responsibility for training teachers and guidance counsellors in Swedish in Finland. The school emphasizes communication, inquiry-based and laboratory learning, as well as social and problem-solving skills. We also encourage the use of modern technology and media in teaching. Environmental sustainability and a strong commitment to language development are key values in our work.

ŽIVICA is a civic association that inspires change. The organization aims to help create a world in which society is respectful and sensitive to people, nature, and the world around them. It believes that only educated and critically thinking people can face the problems of today's world. Their goal is a society built on engagement, democratic principles, and the tenets of humanism. Superficial solutions will not be enough, which is why they inspire people toward active hope through practical solutions that show that change is possible and within each of us.





It's not just
about nature...



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